A SUMMER IN SKYE

BY ALEXANDER SMITH
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY JOHN BLAIR

Joan Dilke.

"Aros"

Corstorphine

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A SUMMER IN SKYE

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EDINBURGH FROM CALTON HILL

[*Frontispiece*

A SUMMER IN SKYE

By

ALEXANDER SMITH

Author of

"A Life Drama" "Alfred Hagart's Household" etc.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

W. FORBES GRAY

ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR BY

JOHN BLAIR

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INTRODUCTION.

IT may seem a bold thing to say that the memory of Alexander Smith is kept green by one book, but who that knows dare contradict? Nobody nowadays lingers over the florid passages of the once belauded *A Life Drama*, a poem which some were wont in the first flush of enthusiasm to place alongside of Keats' best work. And what shall we say of *Dreamthorp* — that delightful volume of essays, the reading of which marked an era in the career of many a young writer of a former generation? It, too, has fallen on ill-fated days, though its admirers are admittedly much more numerous than those of *A Life Drama*. But, be the state of our literary education what it may, most of us are unswervingly loyal to *A Summer in Skye*.

Forty-seven years have passed since that charming book was first published, but it is still read and re-read with much of the old zest. One might almost say of *A Summer in Skye* what

Smith so finely said of Edinburgh, "Nothing can stale its infinite variety." It is still along its own lines incomparably the best book on the subject. It still captivates heart and imagination, still sends hundreds every year "over the sea to Skye." Indeed, any tolerably well-educated person would as soon think of visiting Palestine without an intimate knowledge of the Bible as of visiting Skye without having read Smith's classic. It is only the language of sober fact to say that *A Summer in Skye* has done for the misty Hebridean isle what Scott's *Lady of the Lake* has done for the Trossachs, which is saying much. No Skye hotel-keeper or shop-keeper needs to be told that Smith's book has been long one of his most valuable assets.

And yet, strange to say, the book that is most deeply imbued with the "spiritual atmosphere" of Skye—that sense of unfathomable mystery which seems to brood over the place, was written by one who was not a Skyeman, not even a Highlander. Smith was a Lowlander, born and bred, though, if the whole truth be told, his affinities, mental and moral, were rather with the men of the north. In him dwelt the Celtic imagination, and in his heart burned Celtic fires. It was late, however, in his comparatively short

life ere these characteristics were fully matured. What hastened their ripening more than anything else was his happy marriage, in 1857, to a Skye lady, Flora Macdonald by name, and a blood relation of the renowned protectress of Prince Charles Edward. From that time till his death, ten years later, Smith's love of Highlanders and things Highland amounted to infatuation. Skye became to him the dearest spot on earth. It braced his powers of thought and action, it enriched his poetic fancy, it warmed his heart. The romance and glamour of the "misty isle" became a permanent intellectual possession, and in *A Summer in Skye* we have the true *genius loci* of the island delineated by an unerring hand.

Let it be said at once that *A Summer in Skye* is not a guide-book summing up the hasty impressions of a scribbling hireling. It is not a colourless and fragmentary account of the people and history of Skye compiled in the interest of the tourist who only scampers through the island. It is something infinitely better—the outcome, one may say, of a unique combination of gifts and circumstances. The book may fitly be described as a prose poem—an idealisation of those aspects of Skye life, scenery, and history which appeal to the poetical and historical im-

agination. Smith is anything but systematic in the treatment of his theme. He wanders about and descants upon many subjects which have a very remote connection with Skye. For one thing, he is in no hurry, as he himself avows, to take us there. Nearly a hundred pages are taken up with painting a picture of historical, literary, and social Edinburgh; but what a picture! No more fascinating description of Scotland's capital has ever been penned, and, in saying this, I do not, of course, forget Robert Louis Stevenson. Yes, Smith is discursive, but then we welcome discursiveness in an author who is always interesting, always full of life and colour, never obscure. Smith has the vigilant eye, the hearing ear, and the understanding heart, and how well he employs all three! Then, that bewitching style which carries you on in spite of yourself, who that has felt its spell can ever forget it? Smith was, indeed, a stylist of a high order, and the proof of it is nowhere shown more convincingly than in *A Summer in Skye.*

It is axiomatic that no one will discover the fascination of Skye who is devoid of the imaginative faculty and the historic sense. There is an indescribable charm about the isle of which the matter-of-fact, garrulous tourist knows nothing,

and can know nothing. You cannot "do" Skye as you would "do" the sights of London or Paris. It is an inviolable condition that heart and mind must be attuned to the spirit of the place. Remember what a visit to this Hebridean isle means. "To visit Skye," says Smith with truth, "is to make a progress into 'the dark backward and abysm of time.' You turn your back on the present, and walk into antiquity. You see everything in the light of Ossian, as in the light of a mournful sunset." And as you read *A Summer in Skye* this impression is always uppermost. In a language and imagery of singular vividness Smith visualises, as far as this can be done through the medium of words, those features of Skye life and scenery which constitute its subtle and mysterious charm.

Furthermore, Smith shows in many a fascinating page how the wild grandeur and weirdness of Skye mountain, loch, and glen have left an indelible impress upon the character of the islanders. As Smith viewed the "monstrous peak" of Blaavin where the eagle has its eyrie, or traversed the solitary Glen Sligachan, or looked into the dark waters of Loch Coruisk, or gazed upon the awesome surroundings of this, the dreariest of Scottish lochs, there arose within

him a haunting sense of the littleness and transitoriness of human life, and of its inscrutable mystery. And from many points of view he makes clear the intimate relationship subsisting between the prevailing austerity of the physical features of the island, and the sombre and superstitious note to be found in the typical Skyeman. No doubt, the changes of the last forty years have blunted the keen edge of Smith's narrative, but when all allowances have been made, Skye remains substantially the same. However much the outward aspect of things may change, the romance and glamour do not, cannot pass away. Skye is still a region of hoary tradition, of Ossianic legend, of ghosts and fairies, and of the weirdly supernatural. Round the peat fire of a winter evening, you may still hear tales "full of witches and wizards; of great wild giants crying out, 'Hiv! Haw Hoagraich! It is a drink of thy blood that quenches my thirst this night'; of wonderful castles with turrets and banqueting halls; of magic spells, and the souls of men and women dolefully imprisoned in shapes of beast and bird."

All this enchantment is artistically reflected in the pages of *A Summer in Skye*. That the average Skyeman, a generation ago, was amazingly

superstitious, is patent to all who have read Father M'Crimmon's story, surely one of the most perfect examples of the literature of the second sight. No one after perusing that eerie tale can have any difficulty in appreciating Smith's remark that "it is almost as perilous to doubt the existence of a Skyeman's ghost, as to doubt the existence of a Skyeman's ancestor."

For deep and sympathetic insight, Smith's sketches of Skye character are unsurpassed. A keen observer of the islanders, both at work and at play, he has set forth their outstanding traits in a series of masterly portraits. How sharply does the venerable form of Mr M'Ian stand out before us! Then there is Father M'Crimmon, "the gaunt, solemn-voiced, melancholy-eyed" priest who believed in the existence of ghosts, just as he believed in the existence of America; and John Kelly, the taciturn shepherd whose performances in the consumption of strong drink amazed everybody, and probably himself; and Lachlan Roy, who knew "the points of a sheep or a stirk as well as any man in the island"; and the phlegmatic Angus-with-the-dogs, ever a lover of the canine species, "the sworn foe of polecats, foxes, and ravens," and "an authority on rifles and fowling-pieces."

And if we turn from individual to social life, what a wonderfully vivid picture is that of the uproarious scene in Mr M'Ian's kitchen on the winter evening when the farm lads and lassies "dashed into the whirlwind of the reel of Hoolichan and M'Ian clapped his hands and shouted, and the stranger was forced to mount the dresser to get out of the way of whirling kilt and tempestuous petticoat." There is an undercurrent of sadness in the Skyeman, but there are times when he gives rein to mirth and jollity like the rest of us; and it is a merit of Smith that he depicts the one side with as much fidelity as the other.

A Summer in Skye is full of piquant descriptions of humble life, and of customs that have now practically died out. The account of the patriarchal relations which subsisted between Mr M'Ian and his tenants, and the pen portrait of the landlord who was not only landlord but leech, lawyer, and divine as well, are among the most delightful things in the book. One can hardly imagine that such primitive social conditions should have prevailed in our midst so recently, but prevail they did. Smith, by the way, does not bemoan the lot of the Skye cotter. In their turfen dwellings, "amid surgings of blue smoke,"

he found health, contentment, piety, and industry. "Depend upon it," he says, "there are worse odours than peat-smoke, worse next-door neighbours than a cow or a brood of poultry."

Again, who can fail to be impressed by the realism of the description of Broadford Fair? How skilfully every detail is brought within the range of the mental vision! As we read we seem to see those hardy Skye farmers assembled on the moorland, with the Cuchullins standing like silent sentinels in the background, and the far-stretching waters of Broadford Bay in front. There they are, those brawny men, with their cattle, and their sheep, and their horses, bargaining and discussing the news of the island since last they forgathered, their voices, stentorian though they are, almost drowned by the bellowing of animals, and the general bustle and commotion. But why attempt to recall a scene which is engraven on the memory of every admirer of *A Summer in Skye*, unless it be to enlist the interest of those who have never read that charming book?

No one could desire a more competent or enthusiastic guide to what is of literary and historical interest in Skye than Smith. To him, the pleasantest of all Hebridean associations was the visit of Dr Johnson and James Boswell.

When attending Broadford Fair he must needs leave the hubbub for a time and view the ruins of Corachatachin House in the vicinity. Arrived at the spot, he recalls the "debauch held therein a hundred years ago by a dead Boswell and young Highland bloods." Deeply moved he is, too, by the ruin of the old house of Kingsburgh, to which on a memorable occasion came Flora Macdonald and the fugitive Prince Charles arrayed in female attire. Kilmuir churchyard, in an unkempt grave of which lie the remains of the heroic Flora, stirs poignant feelings. "Skye," he exclaims, "has only one historical grave to dress —and she leaves it *so*." But it is when he gazes upon the castle of Dunvegan, hallowed by the memories of a thousand years, that his historical imagination gets full play. And yet the sight of this ancient home of the Chief of the Macleods is not wholly an unmixed pleasure, for every step he takes within its spacious rooms seems to startle a ghost. A sense of fear creeps over him which reaches its climax in the Fairy Room, where he cannot laugh lest he should hear strange echoes as if something mocked him.

Smith was passionately fond of Skye scenery, and he has sung its praises in many a purple passage. He is rapturous over the magnificent

view from the top of the fantastically-shaped Quirang. The pyramidal rocks known as Macleod's Tables fascinate him no less, and give rise to moralisings on the paltriness of modern wealth compared to an old inheritance of land "which is patent to the eye, which bears your name, around which legends gather." He surveys Loch Coruisk, "the most savage scene of desolation in Britain," with fear and trembling. As for the glories of the Cuchullins, in sunshine and in shadow, who has painted them half so effectively as Smith? And who that has spent a day in wild Glen Sligachan, that veritable *via dolorosa*, can fail to appreciate the force of Smith's impression? I cannot refrain from quoting a portion:

"In Glen Sligachan . . . the scenery curiously repels you, and drives you in on yourself. You have a quickened sense of your own individuality. The enormous bulks, their gradual recedings to invisible crests, their utter movelessness, their austere silence, daunt you. You are conscious of their presence, and you hardly care to speak lest you be overheard. You can't laugh. You would not crack a joke for the world. Glen Sligachan would be the place to do a little bit of self-examination in."

We lay down *A Summer in Skye* with unfeigned regret. It is a book which lives long

in the memory. No one who has watched the mists settle on Blaavin, who has paced the lonely ridges of the Cuchullins, who has trembled at the sight of dark Coruisk, who has felt the eeriness of Glen Sligachan, who has listened to the noise of many waters below hoary Dunvegan, can fail to appreciate its intrinsic worth.

W. FORBES GRAY.

A SUMMER IN SKYE.

EDINBURGH.

SUMMER has leaped suddenly on Edinburgh like a tiger. The air is still and hot above the houses; but every now and then a breath of east wind startles you through the warm sunshine—like a sudden sarcasm felt through a strain of flattery—and passes on detested of every organism. But, with this exception, the atmosphere is so close, so laden with a body of heat, that a thunderstorm would be almost welcomed as a relief. Edinburgh, on her crags, held high towards the sun—too distant the sea to send cool breezes to street and square—is at this moment an uncomfortable dwelling-place. Beautiful as ever, of course—for nothing can be finer than the ridge of the Old Town etched on hot summer azure—but close, breathless, suffocating. Great volumes

of white smoke surge out of the railway station; great choking puffs of dust issue from the houses and shops that are being gutted in Princes Street. The Castle rock is gray; the trees are of a dingy olive; languid "swells," arm-in-arm, promenade uneasily the heated pavement; water-carts everywhere dispense their treasures; and the only human being really to be envied in the city is the small boy who, with trousers tucked up, and unheeding of maternal vengeance, marches coolly in the fringe of the ambulating shower-bath. Oh for one hour of heavy rain! Thereafter would the heavens wear a clear and tender, instead of a dim and sultry hue. Then would the Castle rock brighten in colour, and the trees and grassy slopes doff their dingy olives for the emeralds of April. Then would the streets be cooled, and the dust be allayed. Then would the belts of city verdure, refreshed, pour forth gratitude in balmy smells; and Fife—low-lying across the Forth—break from its hot neutral tint into the greens, purples, and yellows that of right belong to it. But rain won't come; and for weeks, perhaps, there will be nothing but hot sun above, and hot street beneath; and for the respiration of poor human lungs an atmosphere of heated dust, tempered with east wind.

Moreover, one is tired and jaded. The whole man, body and soul, like sweet bells jangled, out of tune, and harsh, is fagged with work, eaten up of impatience, and haunted with visions of vacation. One "babbles o' green fields," like a very Falstaff; and the poor tired ears hum with sea-music like a couple of sea-shells. At last it comes, the 1st of August, and then—like an arrow from a Tartar's bow, like a bird from its cage, like a lover to his mistress—one is off; and before the wild scarlets of sunset die on the northern sea, one is in the silence of the hills, those eternal sun-dials that tell the hours to the shepherd, and in one's nostrils is the smell of peat-reek, and in one's throat the flavour of usquebaugh. Then come long floating summer days, so silent the wilderness, that one can hear one's heart beat; then come long silent nights, the waves heard upon the shore, although *that* is a mile away, in which one snatches the "fearful joy" of a ghost story, told by shepherd or fisher, who believes in it as in his own existence. Then one beholds sunset, not through the smoked glass of towns, but gloriously through the clearness of enkindled air. Then one makes acquaintance with sunrise, which to the dweller in a city, who conforms to the usual proprieties, is about the rarest of this world's sights.

Mr De Quincey maintains, in one of his essays, that dinner—dinner about seven in the evening, for which one dresses, which creeps on with multitudinous courses and *entrées*, which, so far from being a gross satisfaction of appetite, is a feast noble, graceful, adorned with the presence and smile of beauty, and which, from the very stateliness of its progress, gives opportunities for conversation and the encounter of polished minds—saves over-wrought London from insanity. This is no mere humorous exaggeration, but a very truth; and what dinner is to the day the Highlands are to the year. Away in the north, amid its green or stony silences, jaded hand and brain find repose—repose, the depth and intensity of which the idler can never know. In that blessed idleness you become in a strange way acquainted with yourself; for in the world you are too constantly occupied to spend much time in your own company. You live abroad all day, as it were, and only come home to sleep. Away in the north you have nothing else to do, and cannot quite help yourself; and conscience, who has kept open a watchful eye, although her lips have been sealed these many months, gets disagreeably communicative, and tells her mind pretty freely about certain little shabby selfish-

nesses and unmanly violences of temper, which you had quietly consigned — like a document which you were for ever done with — to the waste-basket of forgetfulness. And the quiet, the silence, the rest, is not only good for the soul, it is good for the body too. You flourish like a flower in the open air; the hurried pulse beats a wholesome measure; evil dreams roll off your slumbers; indigestion dies. During your two months' vacation, you amass a fund of superfluous health, and can draw on it during the ten months that succeed. And in going to the north, and wandering about the north, it is best to take everything quietly and in moderation. It is better to read one good book leisurely, lingering over the finer passages, returning frequently on an exquisite sentence, closing the volume, now and then, to run down in your own mind a new thought started by its perusal, than to rush in a swift perfunctory manner through half a library. It is better to sit down to dinner in a moderate frame of mind, to please the palate as well as satisfy the appetite, to educe the sweet juices of meats by sufficient mastication, to make your glass of port "a linked sweetness long drawn out," than to bolt everything like a leathern-faced Yankee for whom the cars are waiting, and who fears that before he has had

his money's worth, he will be summoned by the railway bell. And shall one, who wishes to extract from the world as much enjoyment as his nature will allow him, treat the Highlands less respectfully than he will his dinner? So at least will not I. My bourne is the island of which Douglas dreamed on the morning of Otterburn; but even to *it* I will not unnecessarily hurry, but will look on many places on my way. You have to go to London; but unless your business is urgent, you are a fool to go thither like a parcel in the night train and miss York and Peterborough. It is very fine to arrive at majority, and the management of your fortune which has been all the while accumulating for years; but you do not wish to do so at a sudden leap—to miss the April eyes and April heart of seventeen!

The Highlands can be enjoyed in the utmost simplicity; and the best preparations are—money to a moderate extent in one's pocket, a knapsack containing a spare shirt and a toothbrush, and a courage that does not fear to breast the steep of the hill, and to encounter the pelting of a Highland shower. No man knows a country till he has walked through it; he then tastes the sweets and the bitters of it. He beholds its grand and important points, and all the subtler and concealed

EDINBURGH CASTLE FROM GRASSMARKET

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beauties that lie out of the beaten track. Then, O reader, in the most glorious of the months, the very crown and summit of the fruitful year, hanging in equal poise between summer and autumn, leave London or Edinburgh, or whatever city your lot may happen to be cast in, and accompany me on my wanderings. Our course will lead us by ancient battle-fields, by castles standing in hearing of the surge; by the bases of mighty mountains, along the wanderings of hollow glens; and if the weather holds, we may see the keen ridges of Blaavin and the Cuchullin hills; listen to a legend old as Ossian, while sitting on the broken stair of the castle of Duntulm, beaten for centuries by the salt flake and the wind; and in the pauses of ghostly talk in the long autumn nights, when the rain is on the hills, we may hear—more wonderful than any legend, carrying you away to misty regions and half-forgotten times—the music which haunted the Berserkers of old, the thunder of the northern sea!

A perfect library of books has been written about Edinburgh. Defoe, in his own matter-of-fact, garrulous way, has described the city. Its towering streets, and the follies of its society, are reflected in the inimitable pages of

"Humphrey Clinker." Certain aspects of city life, city amusements, city dissipations, are mirrored in the clear, although somewhat shallow, stream of Fergusson's humour. The old life of the place, the traffic in the streets, the old-fashioned shops, the citizens with cocked hats and powdered hair, with hospitable paunches and double chins, with no end of wrinkles, and hints of latent humour in their worldly-wise faces, with gold-headed sticks, and shapely limbs encased in close-fitting small-clothes, are found in "Kay's Portraits." Passing Scott's other services to the city—the magnificent description in "Marmion," the "high jinks" in "Guy Mannering," the broils of the nobles and wild chieftains who attended the Court of the Jameses in "The Abbot"—he has, in "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," made immortal many of the city localities; and the central character of Jeanie Deans is so unassumingly and sweetly *Scotch*, that she seems as much a portion of the place as Holyrood, the Castle, or the Crags. In Lockhart's "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," we have sketches of society nearer our own time, when the *Edinburgh Review* flourished, when the city was really the Modern Athens, and a seat of criticism giving laws to the empire. In these pages, we are introduced to Jeffrey, to

John Wilson, the Ettrick Shepherd, and Dr Chalmers. Then came *Blackwood's Magazine*, the "Chaldee Manuscript," the "Noctes," and "Margaret Lindsay." Then the "Traditions of Edinburgh," by Mr Robert Chambers ; thereafter the well-known *Edinburgh Journal*. Since then we have had Lord Cockburn's chatty "Memorials of his Time." Almost the other day we had Dean Ramsay's Lectures, filled with pleasant antiquarianism, and information relative to the men and women who flourished half a century ago. And the list may be closed with "Edinburgh Dissected," written after the fashion of Lockhart's "Letters,"—a book containing pleasant reading enough, although it wants the brilliancy, the acuteness, the eloquence, and possesses all the ill-nature, of its famous prototype.

Scott has done more for Edinburgh than all her great men put together. Burns has hardly left a trace of himself in the northern capital. During his residence there his spirit was soured, and he was taught to drink whisky-punch—obligations which he repaid by addressing "Edina, Scotia's darling seat," in a copy of his tamest verses. Scott discovered that the city was beautiful—he sang its praises over the world—and he has put more coin into the pockets of its inhabitants than if he had

established a branch of manufacture of which they had the monopoly. Scott's novels were to Edinburgh what the tobacco trade was to Glasgow about the close of the last century. Although several labourers were before him in the field of the Border Ballads, he made fashionable those wonderful stories of humour and pathos. As soon as "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" appeared, everybody was raving about Melrose and moonlight. He wrote "The Lady of the Lake," and next year a thousand tourists descended on the Trosachs, watched the sun setting on Loch Katrine, and began to take lessons on the bagpipe. He improved the Highlands as much as General Wade did when he struck through them his military roads. Where his muse was one year, a mail-coach and a hotel were the next. His poems are grated down into guide-books. Never was an author so popular as Scott, and never was popularity worn so lightly and gracefully. In his own heart he did not value it highly; and he cared more for his plantations at Abbotsford than for his poems and novels. He would rather have been praised by Tom Purdie than by any critic. He was a great, simple, sincere, warm-hearted man. He never turned aside from his fellows in gloomy scorn;

his lip never curled with a fine disdain. He never ground his teeth save when in the agonies of toothache. He liked society, his friends, his dogs, his domestics, his trees, his historical nick-nacks. At Abbotsford, he would write a chapter of a novel before his guests were out of bed, spend the day with them, and then, at dinner, with his store of shrewd Scottish anecdote, brighten the table more than did the champagne. When in Edinburgh, any one might see him in the streets or in the Parliament House. He was loved by everybody. No one so popular among the souters of Selkirk as the *Shirra.* George IV., on his visit to the northern kingdom, declared that Scott was the man he most wished to see. He was the deepest, simplest, man of his time. The mass of his greatness takes away from our sense of its height. He sinks like Ben Cruachan, shoulder after shoulder, slowly, till its base is twenty miles in girth. Scotland is Scott-land. He is the light in which it is seen. He has proclaimed over all the world Scottish story, Scottish humour, Scottish feeling, Scottish virtue; and he has put money into the pockets of Scottish hotel-keepers, Scottish tailors, Scottish boatmen, and the drivers of the Highland mails.

Every true Scotsman believes Edinburgh to be the most picturesque city in the world ; and truly, standing on the Calton Hill at early morning, when the smoke of fires newly-kindled hangs in azure swathes and veils about the Old Town—which from that point resembles a huge lizard, the Castle its head, church-spires spikes upon its scaly back, creeping up from its lair beneath the Crags to look out on the morning world—one is quite inclined to pardon the enthusiasm of the North Briton. The finest view from the interior is obtained from the corner of St Andrew Street, looking west. Straight before you the Mound crosses the valley, bearing the white Academy buildings ; beyond, the Castle lifts, from grassy slopes and billows of summer foliage, its weather-stained towers and fortifications, the Half-Moon battery giving the folds of its standard to the wind. Living in Edinburgh there abides, above all things, a sense of its beauty. Hill, crag, castle, rock, blue stretch of sea, the picturesque ridge of the Old Town, the squares and terraces of the New—these things seen once are not to be forgotten. The quick life of to-day sounding around the relics of antiquity, and overshadowed by the august traditions of a kingdom, makes residence in Edinburgh more impressive than residence in any other

British city. I have just come in—surely it never looked so fair before? What a poem is that Princes Street! The puppets of the busy, many-coloured hour move about on its pavement, while across the ravine Time has piled up the Old Town, ridge on ridge, gray as a rocky coast washed and worn by the foam of centuries; peaked and jagged by gable and roof; windowed from basement to cope; the whole surmounted by St Giles's airy crown. The New is there looking at the Old. Two Times are brought face to face, and are yet separated by a thousand years. Wonderful on winter nights, when the gully is filled with darkness, and out of it rises, against the sombre blue and the frosty stars, that mass and bulwark of gloom, pierced and quivering with innumerable lights. There is nothing in Europe to match that, I think. Could you but roll a river down the valley it would be sublime. Finer still, to place one's-self near the Burns Monument and look toward the Castle. It is more astonishing than an Eastern dream. A city rises up before you painted by fire on night. High in air a bridge of lights leaps the chasm; a few emerald lamps, like glow-worms, are moving silently about in the railway station below; a solitary crimson one is at rest. That ridged and chimneyed bulk of blackness, with splendour bursting out at every

pore, is the wonderful Old Town, where Scottish history mainly transacted itself; while, opposite, the modern Princes Street is blazing throughout its length. During the day the Castle looks down upon the city as if out of another world; stern with all its peacefulness, its garniture of trees, its slopes of grass. The rock is dingy enough in colour, but after a shower, its lichens laugh out greenly in the returning sun, while the rainbow is brightening on the lowering sky beyond. How deep the shadow which the Castle throws at noon over the gardens at its feet where the children play! How grand when giant bulk and towery crown blacken against sunset! Fair, too, the New Town sloping to the sea. From George Street, which crowns the ridge, the eye is led down sweeping streets of stately architecture to the villas and woods that fill the lower ground, and fringe the shore; to the bright azure belt of the Forth with its smoking steamer or its creeping sail; beyond, to the shores of Fife, soft blue, and flecked with fleeting shadows in the keen clear light of spring, dark purple in the summer heat, tarnished gold in the autumn haze; and farther away still, just distinguishable on the paler sky, the crest of some distant peak, carrying the imagination into the illimitable world. Residence in Edinburgh is

THE CANONGATE TOLBOOTH

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an education in itself. Its beauty refines one like being in love. It is perennial, like a play of Shakespeare's. Nothing can stale its infinite variety.

From a historical and picturesque point of view, the Old Town is the most interesting part of Edinburgh; and the great street running from Holyrood to the Castle—in various portions of its length called the Lawnmarket, the High Street, and the Canongate—is the most interesting part of the Old Town. In that street the houses preserve their ancient appearance; they climb up heavenward, story upon story, with outside stairs and wooden panellings, all strangely peaked and gabled. With the exception of the inhabitants, who exist amidst squalor, and filth, and evil smells undeniably modern, everything in this long street breathes of the antique world. If you penetrate the narrow wynds that run at right angles from it, you see traces of ancient gardens. Occasionally the original names are retained, and they touch the visitor pathetically, like the scent of long-withered flowers. Old armorial bearings may yet be traced above the doorways. Two centuries ago fair eyes looked down from yonder window, now in possession of a drunken Irishwoman. If we but knew it, every crazy tenement has its tragic story; every crumbling wall could its tale unfold. The Canongate is

Scottish history fossilised. What ghosts of kings and queens walk there! What strifes of steel-clad nobles! What wretches borne along, in the sight of peopled windows, to the grim embrace of the "maiden!" What hurrying of burgesses to man the city walls at the approach of the Southron! What lamentations over disastrous battle days! James rode up this street on his way to Flodden. Montrose was dragged up hither on a hurdle, and smote, with disdainful glance, his foes gathered together on the balcony. Jenny Geddes flung her stool at the priest in the church yonder. John Knox came up here to his house after his interview with Mary at Holyrood—grim and stern, and unmelted by the tears of a queen. In later days the Pretender rode down the Canongate, his eyes dazzled by the glitter of his father's crown, while bagpipes skirled around, and Jacobite ladies, with white knots in their bosoms, looked down from lofty windows, admiring the beauty of the "Young Ascanius," and his long yellow hair. Down here of an evening rode Dr Johnson and Boswell, and turned in to the White Horse. David Hume had his dwelling in this street, and trod its pavements, much meditating the wars of the Roses and the Parliament, and the fates of English sovereigns. One day a burly ploughman from

Ayrshire, with swarthy features and wonderful black eyes, came down here and turned into yonder churchyard to stand, with cloudy lids and forehead reverently bared, beside the grave of poor Fergusson. Down the street, too, often limped a little boy, Walter Scott by name, destined in after years to write its "Chronicles." The Canongate once seen is never to be forgotten. The visitor starts a ghost at every step. Nobles, grave senators, jovial lawyers, had once their abodes here. In the old, low-roofed rooms, half-way to the stars, philosophers talked, wits coruscated, and gallant young fellows, sowing wild oats in the middle of last century, wore rapiers and lace ruffles, and drank claret jovially out of silver stoups. In every room a minuet has been walked, while chairmen and linkmen clustered on the pavement beneath. But the Canongate has fallen from its high estate. Quite another race of people are its present inhabitants. The vices to be seen are not genteel. Whisky has supplanted claret. Nobility has fled, and squalor taken possession. Wild, half-naked children swarm around every door-step. Ruffians lounge about the mouths of the wynds. Female faces, worthy of the "Inferno," look down from broken windows. Riots are frequent; and drunken mothers reel past scolding white atomies of chil-

dren that nestle wailing in their bosoms—little wretches to whom Death were the greatest benefactor. The Canongate is avoided by respectable people, and yet it has many visitors. The tourist is anxious to make acquaintance with it. Gentlemen of obtuse olfactory nerve, and of an antiquarian turn of mind, go down its closes and climb its spiral stairs. Deep down these wynds the artist pitches his stool, and spends the day sketching some picturesque gable or doorway. The fever-van comes frequently here to convey some poor sufferer to the hospital. Hither comes the detective in plain clothes on the scent of a burglar. And when evening falls, and the lamps are lit, there is a sudden hubbub and crowd of people, and presently from its midst emerge a couple of policemen and a barrow with a poor, half-clad, tipsy woman from the sister island crouching upon it, her hair hanging loose about her face, her hands quivering with impotent rage, and her tongue wild with curses. Attended by small boys, who bait her with taunts and nicknames, and who appreciate the comic element which so strangely underlies the horrible sight, she is conveyed to the police cell, and will be brought before the magistrate to-morrow—for the twentieth time perhaps—as a "drunk and disorderly,"

and dealt with accordingly. This is the kind of life the Canongate presents to-day—a contrast with the time when the tall buildings enclosed the high birth and beauty of a kingdom, and when the street beneath rang to the horse-hoofs of a king.

The New Town is divided from the Old by a gorge or valley, now occupied by a railway station; and the means of communication are the Mound, Waverley Bridge, and the North Bridge. With the exception of the Canongate, the more filthy and tumble-down portions of the city are well kept out of sight. You stand on the South Bridge, and looking down, instead of a stream, you see the Cowgate, the dirtiest, narrowest, most densely peopled of Edinburgh streets. Admired once by a French ambassador at the court of one of the Jameses, and yet with certain traces of departed splendour, the Cowgate has fallen into the sere and yellow leaf of furniture brokers, second-hand jewellers, and vendors of deleterious alcohol. These second-hand jewellers' shops, the trinkets seen by bleared gaslight, are the most melancholy sights I know. Watches hang there that once ticked comfortably in the fobs of prosperous men, rings that were once placed by happy bridegrooms on the fingers of happy brides, jewels in which lives the sacredness of death-beds. What tragedies, what disruptions of

households, what fell pressure of poverty brought them here! Looking in through the foul windows, the trinkets remind one of shipwrecked gold embedded in the ooze of ocean—gold that speaks of unknown, yet certain, storm and disaster, of the yielding of planks, of the cry of drowning men. Who has the heart to buy them, I wonder? The Cowgate is the Irish portion of the city. Edinburgh leaps over it with bridges; its inhabitants are morally and geographically the lower orders. They keep to their own quarters, and seldom come up to the light of day. Many an Edinburgh man has never set his foot in the street; the condition of the inhabitants is as little known to respectable Edinburgh as are the habits of moles, earth-worms, and the mining population. The people of the Cowgate seldom visit the upper streets. You may walk about the New Town for a twelvemonth before one of these Cowgate pariahs comes between the wind and your gentility. Should you wish to see that strange people "at home," you must visit them. The Cowgate will not come to you: you must go to the Cowgate. The Cowgate holds high drunken carnival every Saturday night; and to walk along it then, from the West Port, through the noble open space of the Grassmarket—where the Covenanters and Captain Porteous suffered—on

to Holyrood, is one of the world's sights, and one that does not particularly raise your estimate of human nature. For nights after your dreams will pass from brawl to brawl, shoals of hideous faces will oppress you, sodden countenances of brutal men, women with loud voices and frantic gesticulations, children who have never known innocence. It is amazing of what ugliness the human face is capable. The devil marks his children as a shepherd marks his sheep—that he may know them and claim them again. Many a face flits past here bearing the sign-manual of the fiend.

But Edinburgh keeps all these evil things out of sight, and smiles, with Castle, tower, church-spire, and pyramid rising into sunlight out of garden spaces and belts of foliage. The Cowgate has no power to mar her beauty. There may be a canker at the heart of the peach—there is neither pit nor stain on its dusty velvet. Throned on crags, Edinburgh takes every eye; and, not content with supremacy in beauty, she claims an intellectual supremacy also. She is a patrician amongst British cities, "A penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree." She has wit if she lacks wealth: she counts great men against millionaires. The success of the actor is insecure until thereunto Edinburgh has set her seal. The poet trembles before the Edinburgh

critics. The singer respects the delicacy of the Edinburgh ear. Coarse London may roar with applause: fastidious Edinburgh sniffs disdain, and sneers reputations away. London is the stomach of the empire—Edinburgh the quick, subtle, far-darting brain. Some pretension of this kind the visitor hears on all sides of him. It is quite wonderful how Edinburgh purrs over her own literary achievements. Swift, in the dark years that preceded his death, looking one day over some of the productions of his prime, exclaimed, "Good heaven! what a genius I once was!" Edinburgh, looking some fifty years back on herself, is perpetually expressing astonishment and delight. Mouldering Highland families, when they are unable to retain a sufficient following of servants, fill up the gaps with *ghosts*. Edinburgh maintains her dignity after a similar fashion, and for a similar reason. Lord-Advocate Moncreiff, one of the members for the city, hardly ever addresses his fellow-citizens without recalling the names of Jeffrey, Cockburn, Rutherfurd, and the other stars that of yore made the welkin bright. On every side we hear of the brilliant society of forty years ago. Edinburgh considers herself supreme in talent—just as it is taken for granted to-day that the present English navy is the most

powerful in the world, because Nelson won Trafalgar. The Whigs consider the *Edinburgh Review* the most wonderful effort of human genius. The Tories would agree with them, if they were not bound to consider *Blackwood's Magazine* a still greater effort. It may be said that Burns, Scott, and Carlyle are the only men really great in literature—taking *great* in a European sense—who, during the last eighty years, have been connected with Edinburgh. I do not include Wilson in the list; for although he was as splendid as any of these for the moment, he was evanescent as a Northern light. In the whole man there was something spectacular. A review is superficially very like a battle. In both there is the rattle of musketry, the boom of great guns, the deploying of endless brigades, charges of brazen squadrons that shake the ground—only the battle changes kingdoms, while the review is gone with its own smoke-wreaths. Scott lived in or near Edinburgh during the whole course of his life. Burns lived there but a few months. Carlyle went to London early, where he has written his important works, and made his reputation. Let the city boast of Scott—no one will say she does wrong in that—but it is not so easy to discover the amazing brilliancy of her other literary lights. Their reputations, after all,

are to a great extent local. What blazes a sun at Edinburgh, would, if transported to London, not unfrequently become a farthing candle. Lord Jeffrey —when shall we cease to hear his praises? With perfect truthfulness one may admit that his lordship was no common man. His "vision" was sharp and clear enough within its range. He was unable to relish certain literary forms, as some men are unable to relish certain dishes—an inaptitude that might arise from fastidiousness of palate, or from weakness of digestion. His style was perspicuous; he had an icy sparkle of epigram and antithesis, some wit, and no enthusiasm. He wrote many clever papers, made many clever speeches, said many clever things. But the man who could so egregiously blunder as to "Wilhelm Meister," who hooted Wordsworth through his entire career, who had the insolence to pen the sentence that opens the notice of the "Excursion" in the *Edinburgh Review*, and who, when writing tardily, but really well, on Keats, could pass over the "Hyperion" with a slighting remark, might be possessed of distinguished parts, but no claim can be made for him to the character of a great critic. Hazlitt, wilful, passionate, splendidly-gifted, in whose very eccentricities and fierce vagaries there was a generosity which belongs only to fine

natures, has sunk away into an almost unknown London grave, and his works into unmerited oblivion; while Lord Jeffrey yet makes radiant with his memory the city of his birth. In point of natural gifts and endowment — in point, too, of literary issue and result — the Englishman far surpassed the Scot. Why have their destinies been so different? One considerable reason is that Hazlitt lived in London—Jeffrey in Edinburgh. Hazlitt was partially lost in an impatient crowd and rush of talent. Jeffrey stood, patent to every eye, in an open space in which there were few competitors. London does not brag about Hazlitt — Edinburgh brags about Jeffrey. The Londoner, when he visits Edinburgh, is astonished to find that it possesses a Valhalla filled with gods — chiefly legal ones — of whose names and deeds he was previously in ignorance. The ground breaks into unexpected flowerage beneath his feet. He may conceive to-day to be a little cloudy—may even suspect east wind to be abroad—but the discomfort is balanced by the reports he hears on every side of the beauty, warmth, and splendour of yesterday. He puts out his hands and warms them, if he can, at that fire of the past. "Ah! that society of forty years ago! Never on this earth did the like

exist. Those astonishing men, Horner, Jeffrey, Cockburn, Rutherfurd! What wit was theirs—what eloquence, what genius! What a city this Edinburgh once was!"

Edinburgh is not only in point of beauty the first of British cities—but, considering its population, the general tone of its society is more intellectual than that of any other. In no other city will you find so general an appreciation of books, art, music, and objects of antiquarian interest. It is peculiarly free from the taint of the ledger and the counting-house. It is a Weimar without a Goethe—Boston without its nasal twang. But it wants variety; it is mainly a city of the professions. London, for instance, contains every class of people; it is the seat of legislature as well as of wealth; it embraces Seven Dials as well as Belgravia. In that vast community class melts imperceptibly into class, from the Sovereign on the throne to the wretch in the condemned cell. In that finely-graduated scale, the professions take their own place. In Edinburgh matters are quite different. It retains the gauds which royalty cast off when it went South, and takes a melancholy pleasure in regarding these—as a lady the love-tokens of a lover who has deserted her to marry into a family of higher rank. A crown and sceptre lie

up in the Castle, but no brow wears the diadem, no hand lifts the golden rod. There is a palace at the foot of the Canongate, but it is a hotel for her Majesty, *en route* for Balmoral—a place where the Commissioner to the Church of Scotland holds his phantom Court. With these exceptions, the old halls echo only the footfalls of the tourist and sight-seer. When royalty went to London, nobility followed ; and in Edinburgh the field is left now, and has been so left for a long time back, to Law, Physic, and Divinity. The professions predominate : than these there is nothing higher. At Edinburgh a Lord of Session is a Prince of the Blood, a Professor a Cabinet Minister, an Advocate an heir to a peerage. The University and the Courts of Justice are to Edinburgh what the Court and the Houses of Lords and Commons are to London. That the Scottish nobility should spend their seasons in London is not to be regretted for the sake of Edinburgh shopkeepers only—their absence affects interests infinitely higher. In the event of a superabundance of princes, and a difficulty as to what should be done with them, it has been frequently suggested that one should be stationed in Dublin, another in Edinburgh, to hold Court in these cities Gold is everywhere preferred to paper ; and in the Irish capital royalty in

the person of Prince Patrick would be more satisfactory than its shadow in the person of a Lord-Lieutenant. A Prince of the Blood in Dublin would be gratefully received by the warm-hearted Irish people. His permanent presence amongst them would cancel the remembrance of centuries of misgovernment; it would strike away for ever the badge and collar of conquest. In Edinburgh we have *had* princes of late years, and seen the uses of them. A prince at Holyrood would effect for the country what Scottish Rights' Associations and University reformers have so long desired. The nobility would again gather—for a portion of the year at least—to their ancient capital; and their sons, as of old, would be found in the University class-rooms. Under the new influence, life would be gayer, airier, brighter. The social tyranny of the professions would to some extent be broken up, the atmosphere would become less legal, and a new standard would be introduced whereby to measure men and their pretensions. For the Prince himself, good results might be expected. He would at the least have some specific public duties to perform; and he would, through intercourse, become attached to the people, as the people in their turn would become attached to him. Edinburgh needs some

little gaiety and courtly pomp to break the coldness of gray stony streets; to brighten a somewhat sombre atmosphere; to mollify the east wind that blows half the year, and the "professional sectarianism" that blows the whole year round. You always suspect the east wind, somehow, in the city. You go to dinner: the east wind is blowing chillily from hostess to host. You go to church, a bitter east wind is blowing in the sermon. The text is that divine one, GOD IS LOVE; and the discourse that follows is full of all uncharitableness.

Of all British cities, Edinburgh—Weimar-like in its intellectual and æsthetic leanings, Florence-like in its freedom from the stains of trade, and more than Florence-like in its beauty—is the one best suited for the conduct of a lettered life. The city as an entity does not stimulate like London, the present moment is not nearly so intense, life does not roar and chafe—it murmurs only; and this interest of the hour, mingled with something of the quietude of distance and the past—which is the spiritual atmosphere of the city—is the most favourable of all conditions for intellectual work or intellectual enjoyment. You have libraries—you have the society of cultivated men and women—you have the eye constantly fed by beauty—the Old Town, jagged, picturesque, piled

up; and the airy, open, coldly-sunny, unhurried, uncrowded streets of the New Town—and, above all, you can "sport your oak," as they say at Cambridge, and be quit of the world, the gossip, and the dun. In Edinburgh, you do not require to create quiet for yourself; you can have it ready-made. Life is leisurely; but it is not the leisure of a village, arising from a deficiency of ideas and motives — it is the leisure of a city reposing grandly on tradition and history, which has done its work, which does not require to weave its own clothing, to dig its own coals, to smelt its own iron. And then, in Edinburgh, above all British cities, you are released from the vulgarising dominion of the hour. The past confronts you at every street corner. The Castle looks down out of history on its gayest thoroughfare. The winds of fable are blowing across Arthur's Seat. Old kings dwelt in Holyrood. Go out of the city where you will, the past attends you like a cicerone. Go down to North Berwick, and the red shell of Tantallon speaks to you of the might of the Douglases. Across the sea, from the gray-green Bass, through a cloud of gannets, comes the sigh of prisoners. From the long sea-board of Fife—which you can see from George Street—starts a remembrance of the Jameses. Queen Mary is at Craigmillar,

Napier at Merchiston, Ben Jonson and Drummond at Hawthornden, Prince Charles in the little inn at Duddingston; and if you go out to Linlithgow, there is the smoke of Bothwellhaugh's fusee, and the Great Regent falling in the crooked street. Thus the past checkmates the present. To an imaginative man, life in or near Edinburgh is like residence in an old castle:—the rooms are furnished in consonance with modern taste and convenience; the people who move about wear modern costume, and talk of current events in current colloquial phrases; there is the last newspaper and book in the library, the air from the last new opera in the drawing-room; but while the hour flies past, a subtle influence enters into it—enriching, dignifying—from oak panelling and carvings on the roof—from the picture of the peaked-bearded ancestor on the wall—from the picture of the fanned and hooped lady—from the old suit of armour and the moth-eaten banner. On the intellectual man, living or working in Edinburgh, the light comes through the stained window of the past. To-day's event is not raw and *brusque;* it comes draped in romantic colour, hued with ancient gules and or. And when he has done his six hours' work, he can take the noblest and most renovating exercise. He can throw down his pen,

put aside his papers, and walk round the Queen's Drive, where the wind from the sea is always fresh and keen; and in his hour's walk he has wonderful variety of scenery—the fat Lothians—the craggy hillside—the valley, which seems a bit of the Highlands—the wide sea, with smoky towns on its margin, and islands on its bosom—lakes with swans and rushes—ruins of castle, palace, and chapel—and, finally, homeward by the high towering street through which Scottish history has rushed like a stream. There is no such hour's walk as this for starting ideas, or, having started, captured, and used them, for getting quit of them again.

Edinburgh is at this moment in the full blaze of her beauty. The public gardens are in blossom. The trees that clothe the base of the Castle rock are clad in green: the "ridgy back" of the Old Town jags the clear azure. Princes Street is warm and sunny—'tis a very flower-bed of parasols, twinkling, rainbow-coloured. Shop windows are enchantment, the flag streams from the Half-moon Battery, church-spires sparkle sun-gilt, gay equipages dash past, the military band is heard from afar. The tourist is already here in wonderful Tweed costume. Every week the wanderers increase, and in a short time the city will be

theirs. By August the inhabitants have fled. The University lets loose, on unoffending humanity, a horde of juvenile M.D.'s warranted to dispense—with the sixth commandment. Beauty listens to what the wild waves are saying. Valour cruises in the Mediterranean; and Law, up to the knees in heather, stalks his stag on the slopes of Ben-Muich-dhui. Those who, from private and most urgent reasons, are forced to remain behind, put brown paper in their front windows; inform the world by placard that letters and parcels may be left at No. 26 round the corner, and live fashionably in their back-parlours. At twilight only do they adventure forth; and if they meet a friend—who ought like the rest of the world to be miles away—they have only of course come up from the sea-side, or their relation's shooting-box, for a night, to look after some imperative business. Tweed-clad tourists are everywhere: they stand on Arthur's Seat, they speculate on the birthplace of Mons Meg, they admire Roslin, eat haggis, attempt whisky-punch, and crowd to Dr Guthrie's church on Sundays. By October the last tourist has departed, and the first student has arrived. Tailors put forth their gaudiest fabrics to attract the eye of ingenuous youth. Whole streets bristle with "lodgings to let." Edinburgh is again filled. The

University class-rooms are crowded; a hundred schools are busy; and Young Briefless,

"Who never is, but always to be, fee'd,"

the sun-brown yet on his face, paces the floor of the Parliament House, four hours a day, in his professional finery of horse-hair and bombazine. During the winter-time are assemblies and dinner-parties. There is a fortnight's opera, with the entire fashionable world in the boxes. The Philosophical Institution is in full session; while a whole army of eloquent lecturers do battle with ignorance on public platforms—each effulging like Phœbus, with his waggon-load of blazing day—at whose coming night perishes, shot through with orient beams. Neither mind nor body is neglected during the Edinburgh season.

In spring time, when the east winds blow, and grey walls of *haar*—clammy, stinging, heaven-high, making disastrous twilight of the brightest noon—come in from the German Ocean, and when coughs and colds do most abound, the Royal Scottish Academy opens her many-pictured walls. From February to May this is the most fashionable lounge in Edinburgh. The rooms are warm, so thickly carpeted that no footfall is heard, and there are seats in abundance. It is quite wonder-

ful how many young ladies and gentlemen get suddenly interested in art. The Exhibition is a charming place for flirtation; and when Romeo is short in the matter of small talk—as Romeo sometimes will be—there is always a picture at hand to suggest a topic. Romeo may say a world of pretty things while he turns up the number of a picture in Juliet's catalogue—for without a catalogue Juliet never appears in the rooms. Before the season closes, she has her catalogue by heart, and could repeat it to you from beginning to end more glibly than she could her Catechism. Cupid never dies; and fingers will tingle as sweetly when they touch over an Exhibition catalogue as over the dangerous pages of "Lancelot of the Lake." If many marriages are not made here, there are gay deceivers in the world, and the picture of deserted Ophelia—the blank smile on her mouth, flowerets stuck in her yellow hair—slowly sinking in the weedy pool, produces no suitable moral effect. To other than young ladies and gentlemen the rooms are interesting, for Scottish art is at this moment more powerful than Scottish literature. Perhaps some half-dozen pictures in each Academy's Exhibition are the most notable intellectual products that Scotland can present for the year. The Scottish brush is stronger than the Scottish pen. It is in

landscape and—at all events up till the other day, when Sir John Watson Gordon died—in portraiture that the Scotch school excels. It excels in the one in virtue of the national scenery, and in the other in virtue of the national insight and humour. For the making of a good portrait a great deal more is required than excellent colour and dexterous brush-work—shrewdness, insight, imagination, common sense, and many another mental quality besides, are needed. No man can paint a good portrait unless he knows his sitter thoroughly; and every good portrait is a kind of biography. It is curious, as indicating that the instinct for biography and portrait-painting are alike in essence, that in both walks of art the Scotch have been unusually successful. It would seem that there is something in the national character predisposing to excellence in these departments of effort. Strictly to inquire how far this predisposition arises from the national shrewdness or the national humour, would be needless; thus much is certain, that Scotland has at various times produced the best portrait-painters and the best writers of biography to be found in the compass of the islands. In the past, she can point to Boswell's "Life of Johnson" and Raeburn's portraits: she yet can claim Thomas Carlyle;

and but lately she could claim Sir John Watson Gordon. Thomas Carlyle is a portrait-painter, and Sir John Watson Gordon was a biographer.

On the walls of the Exhibition, as I have said, will be found some of the best products of the Scottish brain. There, year after year, are to be found the pictures of Mr Noel Paton—some, of the truest pathos, like the "Home from the Crimea;" or that group of ladies and children in the cellar at Cawnpore, listening to the footsteps of deliverers, whom they conceive to be destroyers; or "Luther at Erfurt," the gray morning light breaking in on him as he is with fear and trembling working out his own salvation—and the world's. We have these, but we have at times others quite different from these, and of a much lower scale of excellence, although hugely admired by the young people aforesaid — pictures in which attire is painted instead of passion; where the merit consists in exquisite renderings of unimportant details—jewels, tassels, and dagger hilts; where a landscape is sacrificed to a bunch of ferns, a tragic situation to the pattern on the lady's zone, or the slashed jacket and purple leggings of the knight. Then there are Mr Drummond's pictures from Scottish history and ballad poetry—a string of wild moss-troopers riding over into England to lift cattle;

John Knox on his wedding-day leading his wife home to his quaint dwelling in the Canongate; the wild lurid Grassmarket, crowded with rioters, crimson with torchlight, spectators filling every window of the tall houses, while Porteous is being carried to his death—the Castle standing high above the tumult against the blue midnight and the stars; or the death procession of Montrose—the hero seated on hurdle, not on battle-steed, with beard untrimmed, hair dishevelled, dragged through the crowded street by the city hangman and his horses, yet proud of aspect, as if the slogans of Inverlochy were ringing in his ears, and flashing on his enemies on the balcony above him the fires of his disdain. Then there are Mr Harvey's solemn twilight moors, and covenanting scenes of marriage, baptism, and funeral. And drawing the eye with a stronger fascination—because they represent the places in which we are about to wander—the landscapes of Horatio Macculloch—stretches of Border moorland, with solitary gray peels on which the watery sunbeam strikes, a thread of smoke rising far off from the gipsy's fire; Loch Scavaig in its wrath, the thunder gloom blackening on the peaks of Cuchullin, the fierce rain crashing down on white rock and shingly shore; sunset on Loch Ard, the mountains hanging inverted in the golden

mirror, a plump of water-fowl starting from the reeds in the foreground, and shaking the splendour into dripping wrinkles and widening rings; Ben Cruachan wearing his streak of snow at mid-summer, and looking down on Kilchurn Castle and the winding Awe. He is the most national of the northern landscape-painters; and although he can, on occasion, paint grasses and flowers, and the shimmer of reed-blades in the wind, he loves vast desolate spaces, the silence of the Highland wilderness where the wild deer roam, the shore on which subsides the last curl of the indolent wave. He loves the tall crag wet and gleaming in the sunlight, the rain-cloud on the moor, blotting out the distance, the setting sun raying out lances of flame from behind the stormy clouds —clouds torn, but torn into gold, and flushed with a brassy radiance.

May is an exciting month in Edinburgh, for, towards its close, the Assemblies of the Established and Free Churches meet. For a fortnight or so the clerical element predominates in the city. Every presbytery in Scotland sends up its representative to the metropolis, and an astonishing number of black coats and white neckcloths flit about the streets. At high noon the gaiety of Princes Street is subdued with innumerable suits of sable.

Ecclesiastical newspapers let the world wag as it pleases, so intent are they on the debates. Rocky-featured elders from the far north come up interested in some kirk dispute; and junior counsel waste the midnight oil preparing for appearance at the bar of the House. The opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is attended with a pomp and circumstance which seems a little at variance with Presbyterian quietude of tone and contempt of sacerdotal vanities. Her Majesty's Lord High Commissioner resides at Holyrood, and on the morning of the day on which the Assembly opens he holds his first levee. People rush to warm themselves in the dim reflection of the royal sunshine, and return with faces happy and elate. On the morning the Assembly opens, the military line the streets from Holyrood to the Assembly Hall. A regimental band and a troop of lancers wait outside the palace gates while the procession is slowly getting itself into order. The important moment at length arrives. The Commissioner has taken his seat in the carriage. Out bursts the brass band, piercing every ear; the lancers caracole; an orderly rides with eager spur; the long train of carriages begins to crawl forward in an intermittent manner, with many a dreary pause. At last the head of the procession appears along the

peopled way. First come, in hired carriages, the city councillors, clothed in scarlet robes, and with cocked hats upon their heads. The very mothers that bore them could not recognise them now. They pass on silent with dignity. Then comes a troop of halberdiers in mediæval costume, and looking for all the world as if the Kings, Jacks, and Knaves had walked out of a pack of cards. Then comes a carriage full of magistrates, wearing their gold chains of office over their scarlet cloaks, and eyeing sternly the small boy in the crowd who, from a natural sense of humour, has given vent to an irreverent observation. Then comes the band; then a squadron of lancers, whose horses the music seems to affect; then a carriage occupied with high legal personages, with powder in their hair, and rapiers by their sides, which they could not draw for their lives. Then comes the private carriage of his Grace, surrounded by lancers, whose mercurial steeds plunge and rear, and back and sidle, and scatter the mob as they come prancing broadside on to the pavement, smiting sparks of fire from the kerbstones with their iron hoofs. Thereafter, Tom, Jack, and Harry, for every cab, carriage, and omnibus of the line of route is now allowed to fall in—and so, attended by halberdiers, and soldiers, and a brass band, her Majesty's Commissioner

goes to open the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As his Grace has to attend all the sittings of the reverend court, the Government, it is said, generally selects for the office a nobleman slightly dull of hearing. The Commissioner has no power, he has no voice in the deliberations; but he is indispensable, as a corporation mace is indispensable at a corporation meeting. While the debate is going on below, and two reverend fathers are passionately throttling each other, he is not unfrequently seen, with spectacles on nose, placidly perusing the *Times*. He is allowed two thousand pounds a year, and his duty is to spend it. He keeps open table for the assembled clergymen. He holds a grand evening levee, to which several hundred people are invited. If you are lucky enough to receive a card of invitation, you fall into the line of carriages opposite the Register House about eight o'clock, you are off the High School at nine, ten peals from the church-spires when you are at the end of Regent Terrace, and by eleven your name is being shouted by gorgeous lackeys — whose income is probably as great as your own — through the corridors of Holyrood as you advance towards the presence. When you arrive you find that the country parson, with his wife and daughter, have been before you, and you are a lucky man if,

for refreshment, you can secure a bit of remainder sponge-cake and a glass of lukewarm sherry. On the last occasion of the Commissioner's levee the newspapers inform me that seventeen hundred invitations were issued. Think of it—seventeen hundred persons on that evening bowed before the Shadow of Majesty, and then backed in their gracefulest manner. On that evening the Shadow of Majesty performed seventeen hundred genuflections! I do not grudge the Lord Commissioner his two thousand pounds. Verily, the labourer is worthy of his hire. The vale of life is not without its advantages.

STIRLING AND THE NORTH.

EDINBURGH and Stirling are spinster sisters, who were both in their youth beloved by Scottish kings; but Stirling is the more wrinkled in feature, the more old-fashioned in attire, and not nearly so well to do in the world. She smacks more of the antique time, and wears the ornaments given her by royal lovers—sadly broken and worn now, and not calculated to yield much if brought to the hammer—more ostentatiously in the public eye than does Edinburgh. On the whole, perhaps, her stock of these red sandstone gew-gaws is the more numerous. In many respects there is a striking likeness between the two cities. Between them they in a manner monopolise Scottish history; kings dwelt in both—in and around both may yet be seen traces of battle. Both have castles towering to heaven from the crests of up-piled rocks; both towns are hilly, rising terrace above terrace. The country around Stirling is interesting from its natural beauty no less than from its historical associations. Many battles were

STIRLING FROM BANNOCKBURN

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fought in the seeing of the castle towers. Stirling Bridge, Carron, Bannockburn, Sauchieburn, Sheriffmuir, Falkirk—these battle-fields lie in the immediate vicinity. From the field of Bannockburn you obtain the finest view of Stirling. The Ochills are around you. Yonder sleeps the Abbey Craig, where, on a summer day, Wight Wallace sat. You behold the houses climbing up, picturesque, smoke-feathered; and the wonderful rock, in which the grace of the lily and the strength of the hills are mingled, and on which the castle sits as proudly as ever did rose on its stem. Eastward from the castle ramparts stretches a great plain, bounded on either side by mountains, and before you the vast fertility dies into distance, flat as the ocean when winds are asleep. It is through this plain that the Forth has drawn her glittering coils—a silvery entanglement of loops and links—a watery labyrinth—which Macneil has sung in no ignoble numbers, and which every summer the whole world flocks to see. Turn round, look in the opposite direction, and the aspect of the country has entirely changed. It undulates like a rolling sea. Heights swell up into the blackness of pines, and then sink away into valleys of fertile green. At your feet the Bridge of Allan sleeps in azure smoke

—the most fashionable of all the Scottish *spas*, wherein, by hundreds of invalids, the last new novel is being diligently perused. Beyond are the classic woods of Keir; and ten miles farther, what see you? A multitude of blue mountains climbing the heavens! The heart leaps up to greet them—the ramparts of a land of romance, from the mouths of whose glens broke of old the foray of the freebooter; and with a chief in front, with banner and pibroch in the wind, the terror of the Highland war. Stirling, like a huge brooch, clasps Highlands and Lowlands together.

Standing on the ramparts of Stirling Castle, the spectator cannot help noticing an unsightly excresence of stone and lime rising on the brow of the Abbey Craig. This is the Wallace Tower. Designed to commemorate the war for independence, the building is making but slow progress. It is maintained by charitable contributions, like a lying-in hospital. It is a big beggar man, like O'Connell. It is tormented by an eternal lack of pence, like Mr Dick Swiveller. It sends round the hat as frequently as ever did Mr Leigh Hunt. The Wallace Monument, like the Scottish Rights' Association, sprang from the desire—a good deal stronger a few years ago than now—to preserve in Scotland something of a separate national exist-

ence. Scotland and England were married at the Union; but by many Scotsmen it is considered more dignified that, while appearing as "one flesh" on great public occasions, the two countries should live in separate apartments, see their own circles of friends, and spend their time as to each other it may seem fit. Whether any good could arise from such a state of matters it is needless to inquire—such a state of matters being a plain impossibility. It is apparent that through intimate connexion, community of interest, the presence of one common government, and in a thousand other ways, Time is crumbling down Scotland and England into—Britain. We may storm against this from platforms, declaim passionately against it in "Lays of the Cavaliers," lift up our voices and weep over it in "Braemar Ballads," but necessity cares little for these things, and quietly does her work. In Scotland one is continually coming into contact with an unreasonable prejudice against English manners, institutions, and forms of thought; and in her expression of these prejudices Scotland is frequently neither great nor dignified. There is a narrowness and touchiness about her which is more frequently found in villages than in great cities. She continually suspects that the Englishman is about to touch her thistle rudely, or to take liberties with her unicorn.

Some eight years ago, when lecturing in Edinburgh, Mr Thackeray was hissed for making an allusion to Queen Mary. The audience knew perfectly well that the great satirist was correct in what he stated; but being an Englishman it was impertinent in him to speak the truth about a Scottish Queen in the presence of Scotsmen. When, on the other hand, an English orator comes amongst us, whether as Lord Rector at one of our universities, or the deliverer of an inaugural address at the Philosophical Institution in Edinburgh, and winds up his harangue with flowing allusions to Wallace, Bruce, Burns, our blue hills, John Knox, Caledonia stern and wild, the garb of old Gaul—the closing sentences are lost to the reporters in the frantic cheers of the audience. Several years ago the Scottish Rights' Association, headed by the most chivalric nobleman, and by the best poet in Scotland, surrounded by a score of merchant princes, assembled in the City Hall of Glasgow, and for a whole night held high jubilee. The patriotic fervours, the eloquent speeches, the volleys of cheers, did not so much as break a single tea-cup or appoint a new policeman. Even the eloquent gentleman who volunteered to lay down his head at Carlisle in support of the good cause has never been asked to implement his promise.

The patriot's head is of more use to himself than it can possibly be to any one else. And does not this same prejudice against England, this indisposition to yield up ancient importance, this standing upon petty dignity, live in the cry for Scottish University reform? Is not this the heart of the matter—because England has universities, rich with gifts of princes and the bequests of the charitable, should not Scotland have richly-endowed universities also? In nature the ball fits into the socket more or less perfectly; and the Scottish universities are what the wants and requirements of the Scottish people have made them. We cannot grow in a day an Oxford or a Cambridge on this northern soil; and could Scotsmen forget that they *are* Scotsmen they would see that it is not desirable so to do. Our universities have sent forth for generations physicians, lawyers, divines, properly enough qualified to fulfil their respective duties; and if every ten years or so some half-dozen young men appear with an appetite for a higher education than Scotland can give, and with means to gratify it, what then? In England there are universities able and willing to supply their wants. Their doors stand open to the Scottish youth. Admitting that we could by governmental interference or otherwise make our Scottish

universities equal to Oxford or Cambridge in wealth and erudition, would we benefit thereby the half-dozen ambitious Scottish youth? Not one whit. Far better that they should conclude their education at an English university—in that wider confluence of the streams of society—amid those elder traditions of learning and civility.

And yet this erection of the Wallace Tower on the Abbey Craig has a deeper significance than its promoters are in the least degree aware of. There *is* a certain propriety in the building of a Wallace Monument. Scotland has been united to England, and is beginning to lose remembrance of her independence and separate history—just as the matron in her conjoint duties and interests begins to grow unfamiliar with the events of her girlhood, and with the sound of her maiden name. It is only when the memory of a hero ceases to be a living power in the hearts of men that they think of raising a monument to him. Monuments are for the dead, not for the living. When we hear that some venerable sheik has taken to call public meetings in Mecca, to deliver speeches, and to issue subscription lists for the purpose of raising a monument to Mohammed, and that these efforts are successful, we shall be quite right in thinking that the crescent is in its

wane. Although the subscribers think it something quite other, the building of the Wallace Monument is a bidding farewell to Scottish nationality.

It is from Stirling that I start on my summer journey, and the greater portion of it I purpose to perform on foot. There is a railway now to Callander, whereby time is saved and enjoyment destroyed—but the railway I shall in nowise patronise, meaning to abide by the old coach road. In a short time you are beyond the Bridge of Allan, beyond the woods of Keir, and holding straight on to Dunblane. Reaching it, you pause for a little on the old bridge to look at the artificial waterfall, and the ruined cathedral on the rising ground across the stream, and the walks which Bishop Leighton paced. There is really not much to detain one in the little gray city, and pressing on, you reach Doune, basking on the hill-side. Possibly the reader may never have heard of Doune, yet it has its lions. What are these? Look at the great bulk of the ruined castle! These towers, rising from miles of summer foliage into fair sunlight, a great Duke of Albany beheld for a moment, with a shock of long-past happiness and home, as he laid down his head on the block at Stirling. Rage and shame filled the last heave of the heart, the axe flashed, and ——. As you go

down the steep town road, there is an old-fashioned garden, and a well close to the wall. Look into it steadily—you observe a shadow on the sandy bottom, and the twinkle of a fin. 'Tis a trout—a blind one, which has dwelt, the people will tell you, in its watery cage, for ten years back. It is considered a most respectable inhabitant, and the urchin daring to angle for it would hardly escape whipping. You may leave Doune now. A Duke of Albany lost his head in the view of its castle, a blind trout lives in its well, and visitors feel more interested in the trout than in the duke. The country in the immediate vicinity of Doune is somewhat bare and unpromising, but as you advance it improves, and a few miles on, the road skirts the Teith, the sweetest voiced of all the Scottish streams. The Roman centurion heard that pebbly murmur on his march even as you now hear it. The river, like all beautiful things, is coquettish, and just when you come to love her music, she sweeps away into the darkness of the woods and leaves you companionless on the dusty road. Never mind, you will meet her again at Callander, and there, for a whole summer day, you can lean on the bridge and listen to her singing. Callander is one of the prettiest of Highland villages. It was sunset as I approached it first,

BEN LEDI FROM CALLANDER

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years ago. Beautiful the long crooked street of white-washed houses dressed in rosy colours. Prettily-dressed children were walking or running about. The empty coach was standing at the door of the hotel, and the smoking horses were being led up and down. And right in front stood King Benledi, clothed in imperial purple, the spokes of splendour from the sinking sun raying far away into heaven from behind his mighty shoulders.

Callander sits like a watcher at the opening of the glens, and is a rendezvous of tourists. To the right is the Pass of Leny—well worthy of a visit. You ascend a steep path, birch-trees on right and left; the stream comes brawling down, sleeping for a moment in black pools beloved by anglers, and then hasting on in foam and fury to meet her sister in the Vale of Menteith below. When you have climbed the pass, you enter on a green treeless waste, and soon approach Loch Lubnaig, with the great shadow of a hill blackening across it. The loch is perhaps cheerful enough when the sun is shining on it, but the sun in that melancholy region is but seldom seen. Beside the road is an old churchyard, for which no one seems to care—the tombstones being submerged in a sea of rank grass. The loch of the rueful countenance will not be visited on the present occasion.

My course lies round the left flank of Benledi, straight on for the Trosachs and Loch Katrine. Leaving Callander, you cross the waters of the Leny—changed now from the fury that, with raised voice and streaming tresses, leaped from rock to rock in the glen above—and walk into the country made immortal by the "Lady of the Lake." Every step you take is in the footsteps of Apollo: speech at once becomes song. There is Coilantogle Ford; Loch Venachar, yonder, is glittering away in windy sunshine to the bounding hills. Passing the lake you come on a spot where the hill-side drops suddenly down on the road. On this hill-side Vich Alpine's warriors started out of the ferns at the whistle of their chief; and if you travelled on the coach, the driver would repeat half the poem with curious variations, and point out the identical rock against which Fitz-James leaned—rock on which a dozen eyeglasses are at once levelled in wonder and admiration. The loveliest sight on the route to the Trosachs is about to present itself. At a turn of the road Loch Achray is before you. Beyond expression beautiful is that smiling lake, mirroring the hills, whether bare and green or plumaged with woods from base to crest. Fair azure gem in a setting of mountains! the traveller—even if a

LOCH ACHRAY

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bagman—cannot but pause to drink in its fairy beauty; cannot but remember it when far away amid other scenes and associations. At every step the scenery grows wilder. Loch Achray disappears. High in upper air tower the summits of Ben-Aan and Ben-Venue. You pass through the gorge of the Trosachs, whose rocky walls, born in earthquake and fiery deluge, the fanciful summer has been dressing these thousand years, clothing their feet with drooping ferns and rods of foxglove bells, blackening their breasts with pines, feathering their pinnacles with airy birches, that dance in the breeze like plumage on a warrior's helm. The wind here becomes a musician. Echo sits babbling beneath the rock. The gorge, too, is but the prelude to a finer charm; for before you are aware, doubling her beauty with surprise, there breaks on the right the silver sheet of Loch Katrine, with a dozen woody islands, sleeping peacefully on their shadows.

On the loch, the steamer *Rob Roy* awaits you and away you pant and fume towards a wharf, and an inn, with an unpronounceable name, at the farther end. The lake does not increase in beauty as you proceed. All its charms are congregated at the mouth of the Trosachs, and the upper reaches are bare, desolate, and uninteresting You

soon reach the wharf, and after your natural rage at a toll of twopence exacted from you on landing has subsided, and you have had a snack of something at the inn, you start on the wild mountain road towards Inversneyd. The aspect of the country has now changed. The hills around are bare and sterile, brown streams gurgle down their fissures, the long yellow ribbon of road runs away before you, dipping out of sight sometimes, and reappearing afar. You pass a turf hut, and your nostrils are invaded by a waft of peat reek which sets you coughing, and brings the tears into your eyes; and the juvenile natives eye you askance, and wear the airiest form of the national attire. In truth, there is not a finer bit of Highland road to be found anywhere than that which runs between the inn—which, like the Russian heroes in "Don Juan," might be immortal if the name of it could be pronounced by human organs —and the hotel at Inversneyd. When you have travelled some three miles, the scenery improves, the hills rise into nobler forms with misty wreaths about them, and as you pursue your journey a torrent becomes your companion. Presently, a ruin rises on the hill-side, the nettles growing on its melancholy walls. It is the old fort of Inversneyd, built in King William's time to awe the

turbulent clans. Nothing can be more desolate than its aspect. Sunshine seems to mock it; it is native and endued into its element when wrapt in mist, or pelted by the wintry rain. Passing the old stone-and-lime mendicant on the hill-side—by the way, Tradition mumbles something about General Wolfe having been stationed there at the beginning of his military career—you descend rapidly on Loch Lomond and Inversneyd. The road by this time has become another Pass of Leny: on either side the hills approach, the torrent roars down in a chain of cataracts, and, in a spirit of bravado, takes its proudest leap at the last. Quite close to the fall is the hotel; and on the frail timber bridge that overhangs the cataract, you can see groups of picturesque-hunters, the ladies gracefully timid, the gentlemen gallant and reassuring. Inversneyd is beautiful, and it possesses an added charm in being the scene of one of Wordsworth's poems; and he who has stood on the crazy bridge, and watched the flash and thunder of the stream beneath him, and gazed on the lake surrounded by mountains, will ever after retain the picture in remembrance, although to him there should not have been vouchsafed the vision of the "Highland Girl." A steamer picks you up at Inversneyd, and slides down

Loch Lomond with you to Tarbet, a village sleeping in very presence of the mighty Ben, whose forehead is almost always bound with a cloudy handkerchief. Although the loch is finer higher up, where it narrows toward Glen Falloch —more magnificent lower down, where it widens, many-isled, toward Balloch—it is by no means to be despised at Tarbet. Each bay and promontory wears its peculiar charm; and if the scenery does not astonish, it satisfies. Tarbet can boast, too, of an excellent inn, in which, if the traveller be wise, he will, for one night at least, luxuriously take his ease.

Up betimes next morning, you are on the beautiful road which runs between Tarbet and Arrochar, and begin, through broken, white upstreaming mists, to make acquaintance with the "Cobbler" and some other peaks of that rolling country to which Celtic facetiousness has given the name of "The Duke of Argyle's Bowling-green." Escaping from the birches that line the road, and descending on Arrochar and Loch Long, you can leisurely inspect the proportions of the mountain Crispin. He is a gruesome carle, and inhospitable to strangers. He does not wish to be intruded upon—is a very hermit, in fact; for when, after wild waste of breath and cuticle, a daring mortal climbs

up to him, anxious to be introduced, behold he has slipped his cable, and is nowhere to be seen. And it does not improve the temper of the climber that, when down again, and casting up his eyes, he discovers the rocky figure sitting in his accustomed place. The Cobbler's Wife sits a little way off—an ancient dame, to the full as withered in appearance as her husband, and as difficult of access. They dwell in tolerable amity the twain, but when they do quarrel it is something tremendous! The whole county knows when a tiff is in progress. The sky darkens above them. The Cobbler frowns black as midnight. His Wife sits sulking in the mist. His Wife's conduct aggravates the Cobbler—who is naturally of a peppery temper—and he gives vent to a discontented growl. Nothing loath, and to the full as irascible as her spouse, his Wife spits back fire upon him. The row begins. They flash at one another in the savagest manner, scolding all the while in the grandest Billingsgate. Everything listens to them for twenty miles round. At last the Wife gives in, and falls to downright weeping, the crusty old fellow sending a shot into her at intervals. She cries, and he grumbles, into the night. Peace seems to have been restored somehow when everybody is asleep; for next morning the Cobbler has renewed his youth. He shines in

the sun like a very bridegroom, not a frown on the old countenance of him, and his Wife opposite, the tears hardly dried upon her face yet, smiles upon him through her prettiest head-dress of mist; and for the next six weeks they enjoy as bright, unclouded weather as husband and wife can expect in a world where everything is imperfect.

You leave the little village of Arrochar, trudge round the head of Loch Long, and proceeding downward, along the opposite shore, and skirting the base of the Cobbler, strike for the opening of Glencroe, on your road to Inverary. Glencoe is to the other Highland glens what Tennyson is to contemporary British poets. If Glencoe did not exist, Glencroe would be famous. It is several miles long, lonely, sterile, and desolate. A stream rages down the hollow, fed by tributary burns that dash from the receding mountain-tops. The hill-sides are rough with boulders, as a sea-rock is rough with limpets. Showers cross the path a dozen times during the finest day. As you go along, the glen is dappled with cloud-shadows; you hear the bleating of unseen sheep, and the chances are, that, in travelling along its whole extent, opportunity will not be granted you of bidding "good-morrow" to a single soul. If you are a murderer, you could shout out your secret here, and no one be a bit the

wiser. At the head of the glen the road becomes exceedingly steep ; and as you pant up the incline, you hail the appearance of a stone seat bearing the welcome motto, "Rest, and be thankful." You rest, and *are* thankful. This seat was erected by General Wade while engaged in his great work of Highland road-making ; and so long as it exists the General will be remembered—and Earl Russell too. At this point the rough breast of a hill rises in front, dividing the road ; the path to the left runs away down into the barren and solitary Hell's Glen, in haste to reach Loch Goil ; the other to the right leads through bare Glen Arkinglass, to St Catherine's, and the shore of Loch Fyne, at which point you arrive after a lonely walk of two hours.

The only thing likely to interest the stranger at the little hostelry of St Catherine's is John Campbell, the proprietor of the same, and driver of the coach from the inn to the steamboat wharf at Loch Goil. John has a presentable person and a sagacious countenance ; his gray eyes are the homes of humour and shrewdness ; and when seated on the box, he flicks his horses and manages the ribbons to admiration. He is a good story-teller, and he knows it. He has not started on his journey a hundred yards when, from something or another, he

finds you occasion for a story, which is sure to produce a roar of laughter from those alongside of, and behind, him. Encouraged by success, John absolutely coruscates, anecdote follows anecdote as flash of sheet-lightning succeeds flash of sheet-lightning on a summer night; and by the time he is half-way, he is implored to desist by some sufferer whose midriff he has convulsed. John is naturally a humorist; and as every summer and autumn the Highlands are overrun with tourists, he, from St Catherine's to Loch Goil, surveys mankind with extensive view. In his time he has talked with most of our famous men, and can reproduce their tones to perfection. It is curious to notice how literary and political greatness picture themselves in the eyes of a Highland coachman! The lion who entrances the *soirées* has his mane clipped. For John Campbell, cliques and coteries, and the big guns of the reviews, exist not. To him Fame speaks in Gaelic, and concerns herself mainly with sheep and black cattle. What is the good of being a distinguished novelist if you cannot swallow a glass of bitters of a morning? John will distinguish between Tupper and Tennyson, and instruct you which is the better man, but he will draw his conclusions from their "tips" rather than from their poetry. He will agree with you that Lord Palmerston is a distin-

THE COBBLER FROM LOCH KATRINE

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guished individual ; but while you are thinking of the Premier's statesmanship, he is thinking of the Premier's jauntiness on the morning he had the honour of driving him. John's ideas of public men, although arrived at after a curious fashion, are pretty generally correct. Every one who tarries at St Catherine's should get himself driven across to Loch Goil by John Campbell, and should take pains to procure a seat on the box beside him. When he returns to the south, he can relate over again the stories he hears, and make himself the hero of them. The thing has been done before, and will be again.

A small wash-tub of a steamer carries you across Loch Fyne to Inverary in an hour. Arriving, you find the capital of the West Highlands a rather pretty place, with excellent inns, several churches, a fine bay, a ducal residence, a striking conical hill —Duniquoich the barbarous name of it—wooded to the chin, and with an ancient watch-tower perched on its bald crown. The chief seat of the Argyles cannot boast of much architectural beauty, being a square building with pepper-box-looking towers stuck on the corners. The grounds are charming, containing fine timber, winding walks, stately avenues, gardens, and through all, spanned by several bridges, the Airy bubbles sweetly to

the sea. Scott is here. If the "Lady of the Lake" rings in your ears at the Trosachs, the "Legend of Montrose" haunts you at Inverary. Every footstep of ground is hallowed by that noble romance. It is the best guide-book to the place. No tourist should leave Inverary before he ascends Duniquoich—no very difficult task either, for a path winds round and round it. When you emerge from the woods beside the watch-tower on the summit, Inverary, far beneath, has dwindled to a toy town —not a sound is in the streets; unheard the steamer roaring at the wharf, and urging dilatory passengers to haste by the clashes of an angry bell. Along the shore nets stretched from pole to pole wave in the drying wind. The great boatless blue loch stretches away flat as a ballroom floor; and the eye wearies in its flight over endless miles of brown moor and mountain. Turn your back on the town, and gaze towards the north! It is still "a far cry to Loch Awe," and a wilderness of mountain peaks tower up between you and that noblest of Scottish lakes!—of all colours too—green with pasture, brown with moorland, touched with the coming purple of the heather, black with a thunder-cloud of pines. What a region to watch the sun go down upon! But for that you cannot wait; for to-day you lunch at Cladich, dine at Dalmally,

and sleep in the neighbourhood of Kilchurn—in the immediate presence of Ben Cruachan.

A noble vision of mountains is to be obtained from the road above Cladich. Dalmally is a very paradise of a Highland inn,—quiet, sequestered, begirt with the majesty and the silence of mountains,—a place where a world-weary man may soothe back into healthful motion jarred pulse and brain ; a delicious nest for a happy pair to waste the honeymoon in. Dalmally stands on the shores of Loch Awe, and in the immediate vicinity of Kilchurn Castle and Ben Cruachan. The castle is picturesque enough to please the eye of the landscape-painter, and large enough to impress the visitor with a sense of baronial grandeur. And it is ancient enough, and fortunate enough too—for to that age does not always attain—to have legends growing upon its walls like the golden lichens or the darksome ivies. The vast shell of a building looks strangely impressive standing there, mirrored in summer waters, with the great mountain looking down on it. It was built, it is said, by a lady in the Crusade times, when her lord was battling with the infidel. The most prosaic man gazing on a ruin becomes a poet for the time being. You incontinently sit down, and think how, in the old pile, life went on for

generations—how children were born and grew up there—how brides were brought home there, the bridal blushes yet on their cheeks—how old men died there, and had by filial fingers their eyes closed, as blinds are drawn down on the windows of an empty house, and the withered hands crossed decently upon the breasts that will heave no more with any passion. The yule fires, and the feast fires that blazed on the old hearths have gone out now. The arrow of the foeman seeks no longer the window slit. To day and night, to winter and summer, Kilchurn stands empty as a skull; yet with no harshness about it; possessed rather of a composed and decent beauty—reminding you of a good man's grave, with the number of his ripe years, and the catalogue of his virtues chiselled on the stone above him: telling of work faithfully done, and of the rest that follows, for which all the weary pine.

Ben Cruachan, if not the monarch of Scottish mountains, is, at all events, one of the princes of the blood. He is privileged to wear a snow-wreath in presence of the sun at his midsummer levee, and like a prince he wears it on the rough breast of him. Ben Cruachan is seen from afar: is difficult to climb, and slopes slowly down to the sea level, his base being twenty miles in

girth, it is said. From Ben Cruachan and Kilchurn, Loch Awe, bedropt with wooded islands, stretches Obanwards, presenting in its course every variety of scenery. Now the loch spreads like a sea, now it shrinks to a rapid river—now the banks are wooded like the Trosachs, now they are bare as the "Screes" at Wastwater; and consider as you walk along what freaks light and shade are playing every moment—how shadows, hundred-armed, creep along the mountain-side—how the wet rock sparkles like a diamond, and then goes out—how the sunbeam slides along a belt of pines—and how, a slave to the sun, the lake quivers in light around her islands when he is unobscured, and wears his sable colours when a cloud is on his face. On your way to Oban there are many places worth seeing: Loch Etive, with its immemorial pines, beloved by Professor Wilson; Bunawe, Taynult, Connel Ferry, with its sea view and salt-water cataract; and Dunstaffnage Castle, once a royal residence, and from which the stone was taken which is placed beneath the coronation chair at Westminster. And so, if the whole journey from Inverary is performed on foot, Luna will light the traveller into Oban.

OBAN.

OBAN, which, during winter, is a town of deserted hotels, begins to get busy by the end of June. Yachts skim about in the little bay; steamers, deep-sea and coasting, are continually arriving and departing; vehicles rattle about in the one broad, and the many narrow streets; and in the inns, boots, chamber-maid, and waiter are distracted with the clangour of innumerable bells. Out of doors, Oban is not a bad representation of Vanity Fair. Every variety of pleasure-seeker is to be found there, and every variety of costume. Reading parties from Oxford lounge about, smoke, stare into the small shop windows, and consult "Black's Guide." Beauty, in light attire, perambulates the principal street, and taciturn Valour in mufti accompanies her. Sportsmen in knickerbockers stand in groups at the hotel doors; Frenchmen chatter and shrug their shoulders; stolid Germans smoke curiously-curved meerschaum pipes; and individuals who have not a drop of Highland blood in their veins flutter about in the garb of the

OBAN FROM THE SOUTH

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Gael, "a hundredweight of cairngorms throwing a prismatic glory around their persons." All kinds of people, and all kinds of sounds are there. From the next street the tones of the bagpipe come on the ear; tipsy porters abuse each other in Gaelic. Round the corner the mail comes rattling from Fort William, the passengers clustering on its roof; from the pier the bell of the departing steamer urges passengers to make haste; and passengers who have lost their luggage rush about, shout, gesticulate, and not unfrequently come into fierce personal collisior with one of the tipsy porters aforesaid. A more hurried, nervous, frenzied place than Oban, during the summer and autumn months, it is difficult to conceive. People seldom stay there above a night. The old familiar faces are the resident population. The tourist no more thinks of spending a week in Oban than he thinks of spending a week in a railway station. When he arrives his first question is after a bedroom; his second, as to the hour at which the steamer from the south is expected.

And the steamer, be it said, does not always arrive at a reasonable hour. She may be detained some time at Greenock; in dirty weather she may be "on" the Mull of Cantyre all night, buffeted by the big Atlantic there; so that he must be a bold man, or a man gifted with the second sight, who

ventures anything but a vague guess as to the hour of her arrival at Oban. And the weather *is* dirty; the panes are blurred with raindrops; outside one beholds an uncomfortable sodden world, a spongy sky above, and midway, a gull sliding sideways through the murky atmosphere. The streets are as empty now as they will be some months hence. Beauty is in her own room crying over "Enoch Arden," and Valour, taciturn as ever, is in the smoking saloon. The Oxford reading party—which, under the circumstances, has not the slightest interest in Plato—attempts, with no great success, to kill the time by playing at pitch-and-toss. The gentlemen in the Highland dress remain indoors—birds with fine feathers do not wish to have them draggled—and the philabeg and an umbrella would be a combination quite too ridiculous. The tipsy porter is for the time silent; but from the next street the bagpipe grows in volume and torture. How the sound of it pains the nervous ear of a man half-maddened by a non-arriving steamer and a rainy day at Oban! Heavily the hours creep on; and at last the *Clansman* does steam in with wet decks—thoroughly washed by Atlantic brine last night—and her hundred and fifty passengers, two-thirds of whom are sea-sick.

I do not, however, proceed with the *Clansman*.

I am waited for at Inverness; and so, when the weather has cleared, on a lovely morning, I am chasing the flying dazzle of the sun up the lovely Linnhe Loch; past hills that come out on one and recede; past shores that continually shift and change; and am at length set down at Fort William in the shadow of Ben Nevis.

When a man goes to Caprera, he, as a matter of course, brings a letter of introduction to Garibaldi —when I went to Fort William, I, equally as a matter of course, brought a letter of introduction to Long John. This gentleman, the distiller of the place, was the tallest man I ever beheld out of an exhibition—whence his familiar *sobriquet*—and must, in his youth, have been of incomparable physique. The German nation has not yet decided whether Goethe or Schiller is the greater poet—the Highlander has not yet decided whether "Long John" or "Talisker" is the finer spirit. I presented my letter and was received with the hospitality and courteous grace so characteristic of the old Gael. He is gone now, the happy-hearted Hercules—gone like one of his own drams! His son distils in his stead—but he must feel that he is treading in the footsteps of a greater man. The machinery is the same, the malt is of quality as fine, but he will never produce whisky

like him who is no more. The text is the same, but Charles Kean's Hamlet will never be like his father's.

I saw Inverlochy Castle, and thought of the craven Argyle, the gallant Montrose, the slaughtered Campbells. I walked up Glen Nevis; and then, one summer morning, I drove over to Bannavie, stepped on board a steamer, and was soon in the middle of the beautiful Loch Lochy.

And what a day and what a sail that was! What a cloudless sky above! What lights and shadows as we went! On Fort Augustus we descended by a staircase of locks, and while there I spent half an hour in the museum of Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming. We then entered Loch Ness—stopped for a space to visit the Fall of Foyers, which, from scarcity of water, looked "seedy" as a moulting peacock; saw further on, and on the opposite shore, a promontory run out into the lake like an arm, and the vast ruin of Castle Urquhart at the end of it like a clenched fist—menacing all and sundry. Then we went on to Inverness, where I found my friend Fellowes, who for some time back had been amusing himself in that pleasant Highland town reading law. We drove out to Culloden, and stood on the moor at sunset. Here the butcher Cumberland trod out romance. Here

one felt a Jacobite and a Roman Catholic. The air seemed scented by the fumes of altar-incense, by the burning of pastiles. The White Rose was torn and scattered, but its leaves had not yet lost their odours. "I should rather have died," I said, "like that wild chief who, when his clan would not follow him, burst into tears at the ingratitude of his children, and charged alone on the English bayonets, than like any other man of whom I have read in history."

"He wore the sole pair of brogues in the possession of his tribe," said my companion. "I should rather have died like Salkeld at the blowing in of the Delhi gate."

SKYE AT LAST.

WHILE tarrying at Inverness, a note which we had been expecting for some little time reached Fellowes and myself from M'Ian junior, to the effect that a boat would be at our service at the head of Loch Eishart on the arrival at Broadford of the Skye mail; and that six sturdy boatmen would therefrom convey us to our destination. This information was satisfactory, and we made our arrangements accordingly. The coach from Inverness to Dingwall—at which place we were to catch the mail—was advertised to start at four o'clock in the morning, and to reach its bourne two hours afterwards; so, to prevent all possibility of missing it, we resolved not to go to bed. At that preposterous hour we were in the street with our luggage, and in a short time the coach—which seemed itself not more than half awake—came lumbering up. For a while there was considerable noise; bags and parcels of various kinds were tumbled out of the coach office, mysterious doors were opened in the body of the

vehicle into which these were shot. The coach stowed away its parcels in itself, just as in itself the crab stows away its food and *impedimenta.* We clambered up into the front beside the driver, who was enveloped in a drab great-coat of many capes; the guard was behind. "All right," and then, with a cheery chirrup, a crack of the whip, a snort and toss from the gallant roadsters, we were off. There is nothing so delightful as travelling on a stage coach, when you start in good condition, and at a reasonable hour. For myself, I never tire of the varied road flashing past, and could dream through a country in that way from one week's end to the other. On the other hand, there is nothing more horrible than starting at four A.M., half-awake, breakfastless, the chill of the morning playing on your face as the dewy machine spins along. Your eyes close in spite of every effort, your blood thick with sleep, your brain stuffed with dreams; you wake and sleep, and wake again; and the Vale of Tempe itself, with a Grecian sunrise burning into day ahead, could not rouse you into interest, or blunt the keen edge of your misery. I recollect nothing of this portion of our journey save its disagreeableness; and alit at Dingwall, cold, wretched, and stiff, with a cataract of needles and pins pouring down my right

leg, and making locomotion anything but a pleasant matter. However, the first stage was over, and on that we congratulated ourselves. Alas! we did not know the sea of troubles into which we were about to plunge—the Iliad of misfortune of which we were about to become the heroes. We entered the inn, performed our ablutions, and sat down to breakfast with appetite. Towards the close of the meal my companion suggested that, to prevent accidents, it might be judicious to secure seats in the mail without delay. Accordingly I went in quest of the landlord, and after some difficulty discovered him in a small office littered with bags and parcels, turning over the pages of a ledger. He did not lift his eyes when I entered. I intimated my wish to procure two places toward Broadford. He turned a page, lingered on it with his eye as if loath to leave it, and then inquired my business. I repeated my message. He shook his head. "You are too late; you can't get on to-day." "What! can't two places be had?" "Not for love or money, sir. Last week Lord Deerstalker engaged the mail for his servants. Every place is took." "The deuce! do you mean to say that we can't get on?" The man, whose eyes had returned to the page, which he held all the while in one hand, nodded assent. "Come, now, this

sort of thing wont do. My friend and I are anxious to reach Broadford to-night. Do you mean to say that we must either return or wait here till the next mail comes up, some three days hence?" "You can post, if you like: I'll provide you with a machine and horses." "You'll provide us with a machine and horses," said I, while something shot through my soul like a bolt of ice.

I returned to Fellowes, who replied to my recital of the interview with a long whistle. When the mail was gone, we formed ourselves into a council of war. After considering our situation from every side, we agreed to post, unless the landlord should prove more than ordinarily rapacious. I went to the little office and informed him of our resolution. We chaffered a good deal, but at last a bargain was struck. I will not mention what current coin of the realm was disbursed on the occasion; the charge was as moderate as in the circumstances could have been expected. I need only say that the journey was long, and to consist of six stages, a fresh horse at every stage.

In due time a dog-cart was brought to the door, in which was harnessed a tall raw-boned white horse, who seemed to be entering in the sullen depths of his consciousness a protest against our proceedings. We got in, and the animal was set

in motion. There never was such a slow brute. He evidently disliked his work: perhaps he snuffed the rainy tempest imminent. Who knows! At all events, before he was done with us he took ample revenge for every kick and objurgation which we bestowed on him. Half an hour after starting, a huge rain-cloud was black above us; suddenly we noticed one portion crumble into a livid streak which slanted down to earth, and in a minute or two it burst upon us as if it had a personal injury to avenge. A scold of the Cowgate, emptying her wrath on the husband of her bosom, who has reeled home to her tipsy on Saturday night, with but half his wages in his pocket, gives but a faint image of its virulence. Umbrellas and oil-skins — if we had had them— would have been useless. In less than a quarter of an hour we were saturated like a bale of cotton which has reposed for a quarter of a century at the bottom of the Atlantic; and all the while, against the fell lines of rain, heavy as bullets, straight as cavalry lances, jogged the white horse, heedless of cry and blow, with now and again but a livelier prick and motion of the ear, as if to him the whole thing was perfectly delightful. The first stage was a long one; and all the way from Strathpeffer to Garve, from Garve to Milltown, the

rain rushed down on blackened wood, hissed in marshy tarn, boiled on iron crag. At last the inn was descried afar; a speck of dirty white in a world of rainy green. Hope revived within us. Another horse could be procured there. O Jarvie, cudgel his bones amain, and Fortune may yet smile!

On our arrival, however, we were informed that certain travellers had, two hours before, possessed themselves of the only animal of which the establishment could boast. At this intelligence hope fell down stone dead as if shot through the heart. There was nothing for it but to give our steed a bag of oats, and then to hie on. While the white was comfortably munching his oats, we noticed from the inn-door that the wet yellow road made a long circuit, and it occurred to us that if we struck across country for a mile or so at once, we could reach the point where the road disappeared in the distance quite as soon as our raw-boned friend. In any case waiting was weary work, and we were as wet now as we could possibly be. Instructing the driver to wait for us should we not be up in time—of which we averred there was not the slightest possibility—we started. We had firm enough footing at first; but after a while our journey was the counterpart of the

fiend's passage through chaos, as described by Milton. Always stick to beaten tracks: short cuts, whether in the world of matter, or in the world of ethics, are bad things. In a little time we lost our way, as was to have been expected. The wind and rain beat right in our faces, we had swollen streams to cross, we tumbled into morasses, we tripped over knotted roots of heather. When, after a severe march of a couple of hours, we gained the crest of a small eminence, and looked out on the wet, black desolation, Fellowes took out a half-crown from his waistcoat pocket, and expressed his intention there and then to "go in" for a Highland property. From the crest of this eminence, too, we beheld the yellow road beneath, and the dog-cart waiting; and when we got down to it, found the driver so indignant that we thought it prudent to propitiate him with our spirit flask. A caulker turneth away wrath—in the Highlands at least.

Getting in again the white went at a better pace, the rain slackened somewhat, and our spirits rose in proportion. Our hilarity, however, was premature. A hill rose before us, up which the yellow road twisted and wriggled itself. This hill the white would in nowise take. The whip was of no avail; he stood stock-still. Fellowes applied his

stick to his ribs—the white put his fore legs steadily out before him and refused to move. I jumped out, seized the bridle, and attempted to drag him forward; the white tossed his head high in air, showing at the same time a set of vicious teeth, and actually backed. What was to be done? Just at this moment, too, a party of drovers, mounted on red uncombed ponies, with hair hanging over their eyes, came up, and had the ill-feeling to *tee-hee* audibly at our discomfiture. This was another drop of acid squeezed into the bitter cup. Suddenly, at a well-directed whack, the white made a desperate plunge and took the hill. Midway he paused, and attempted his old game, but down came a hurricane of blows, and he started off—

"'Twere long to tell and sad to trace"

the annoyance that raw-boned quadruped wrought us. But it came to an end at last. And at parting I waved the animal, sullen and unbeloved, my last farewell; and wished that no green paddock should receive him in his old age, but that his ill-natured flesh should be devoured by the hounds; that leather should be made of his be-cudgelled hide, and hoped that, considering its toughness, of it should the boots and shoes of a poor man's children be manufactured.

Late in the afternoon we reached Jean-Town, on the shores of Loch Carron. 'Tis a tarry, scaly village, with a most ancient and fish-like smell. The inhabitants have suffered a sea-change. The men stride about in leather fishing-boots, the women sit at the open doors at work with bait-baskets. Two or three boats are moored at the stone-heaped pier. Brown, idle nets, stretched on high poles along the beach, flap in the winds. We had tea at the primeval inn, and on intimating to the landlord that we wished to proceed to Broadford, he went off to engage a boat and crew. In a short time an old sea-dog, red with the keen breeze, and redolent of the fishy brine, entered the apartment with the information that everything was ready. We embarked at once, a sail was hoisted, and on the vacillating puff of evening we dropped gently down the loch. There was something in the dead silence of the scene and the easy motion of the boat that affected one. Weary with travel, worn out with want of sleep, yet, at the same time, far from drowsy, with every faculty and sense rather in a condition of wide and intense wakefulness, everything around became invested with a singular and frightful feeling. *Why*, I know not, for I have had no second experience of the kind; but on this occasion, to my overstrained vision, every object

became instinct with a hideous and multitudinous life. The clouds congealed into faces and human forms. Figures started out upon me from the mountain-sides. The rugged surfaces, seamed with torrent lines, grew into monstrous figures, and arms with clutching fingers. The sweet and gracious shows of nature became, under the magic of lassitude, a phantasmagoria hateful and abominable. Fatigue changed the world for me as the microscope changes a dewdrop—when the jewel, pure from the womb of the morning, becomes a world swarming with unutterable life—a battle-field of unknown existences. As the aspects of things grew indistinct in the fading light, the possession lost its pain; but the sublimity of one illusion will be memorable. For a barrier of mountains standing high above the glimmering lower world, distinct and purple against a "daffodil sky," seemed the profile of a gigantic man stretched on a bier, and the features, in their sad imperial beauty, seemed those of the first Napoleon. Wonderful that mountain-monument, as we floated seaward into distance—the figure sculptured by earthquake, and fiery deluges sleeping up there, high above the din and strife of earth, robed in solemn purple, its background the yellow of the evening sky!

About ten we passed the rocky portals of the

loch on the last sigh of evening, and stood for the open sea. The wind came only in intermitting puffs, and the boatmen took to the oars. The transparent autumn night fell upon us; the mainland was gathering in gloom behind, and before us rocky islands glimmered on the level deep. To the chorus of a Gaelic song of remarkable length and monotony the crew plied their oars, and every plash awoke the lightning of the main. The sea was filled with elfin fire. I hung over the stern, and watched our brilliant wake seething up into a kind of pale emerald, and rushing away into the darkness. The coast on our left had lost form and outline, withdrawing itself into an undistinguishable mass of gloom, when suddenly the lights of a village broke clear upon it like a bank of glow-worms. I inquired its name, and was answered, "Plockton." In half an hour the scattered lights became massed into one; soon that died out in the distance. Eleven o'clock! Like one man the rowers pull. The air is chill on the ocean's face, and we wrap ourselves more closely in our cloaks. There is something uncomfortable in the utter silence and loneliness of the hour—in the phosphorescent sea, with its ghostly splendours. The boatmen, too, have ceased singing. Would that I were taking mine ease with M'Ian! Suddenly a strange

sighing sound is heard behind. One of the crew springs up, hauls down the sail, and the next moment the squall is upon us. The boatmen hang on their oars, and you hear the rushing rain. Whew! how it hisses down on us, crushing everything in its passion. The long dim stretch of coast, the dark islands, are in a moment shut out; the world shrinks into a circumference of twenty yards; and within that space the sea is churned into a pale illumination—a light of misty gold. In a moment we are wet to the skin. The boatmen have shipped their oars, drawn their jacket-collars over their ears, and there we lie at midnight shelterless to the thick hiss of the rain. But it has spent itself at last, and a few stars are again twinkling in the blue. It is plain our fellows are somewhat tired of the voyage. They cannot depend upon a wind; it will either be a puff, dying as soon as born, or a squall roaring down on the sea, through the long funnels of the glens; and to pull all the way is a dreary affair. The matter is laid before us—the voices of the crew are loud for our return. They will put us ashore at Plockton —they will take us across in the morning. A cloud has again blotted the stars, and we consent. Our course is altered, the oars are pulled with redoubled vigour; soon the long dim line of coast rises before

us, but the lights have burned out now, and the Plocktonites are asleep. On we go; the boat shoots into a "midnight cove," and we leap out upon masses of slippery sea-weed. The craft is safely moored. Two of the men seize our luggage, and we go stumbling over rocks, until the road is reached. A short walk brings us to the inn, or rather public-house, which is, however, closed for the night. After some knocking we were admitted, wet as Newfoundlands from the lake. Wearied almost to death, I reached my bedroom, and was about to divest myself of my soaking garments, when, after a low tap at the door, the owner of the boat entered. He stated his readiness to take us across in the morning; he would knock us up shortly after dawn; but as he and his companions had no friends in the place, they would, of course, have to pay for their beds and their breakfasts before they sailed; "an' she was shure the shentlemens waana expect her to pay the same." With a heavy heart I satisfied the cormorant. He insisted on being paid his full hire before he left Jean-Town, too! Before turning in, I looked what o'clock. One in the morning! In three hours M'Ian will be waiting in his galley at the head of Eishart's Loch. Unfortunates that we are!

At least, thought I when I awoke, there is satisfaction in accomplishing something quite peculiar There are many men in the world who have performed extraordinary actions; but Fellowes and myself may boast, without fear of contradiction, that we are the only travellers who ever arrived at Plockton. Looking to the rottenness of most reputations nowadays, our feat is distinction sufficient for the ambition of a private man. We ought to be made lions of when we return to the abodes of civilisation. I have heard certain beasts roar, seen them wag their tails to the admiration of beholders, and all on account of a slighter matter than that we wot of. Who, pray, is the pale gentleman with the dishevelled locks, yonder, in the flower-bed of ladies, to whom every face turns? What! don't you know? The last new poet; author of the "Universe." Splendid performance. Pooh! a reed shaken by the wind. Look at us. We are the men who arrived at Plockton! But, heavens! the boatmen should have been here ere this. Alarmed, I sprang out of bed, clothed in haste, burst into Fellowes' room, turned him out, and then proceeded down stairs. No information could be procured, nobody had seen our crew. That morning they had not called at the house. After a while a fisherman sauntered in, and in con-

sideration of certain stimulants to be supplied by us, admitted that our fellows were acquaintances of his own; that they had started at day-break, and would now be far on their way to Jean-Town. The scoundrels, so overpaid too! Well, well, there's another world. With some difficulty we gathered from our friend that a ferry from the mainland to Skye existed at some inconceivable distance across the hills, and that a boat perhaps might be had there. But how was the ferry to be reached? No conveyance could be had at the inn. We instantly despatched scouts to every point of the compass to hunt for a wheeled vehicle. At height of noon our messengers returned with the information that neither gig, cart, nor wheelbarrow could be had on any terms. What *was* to be done? I was smitten by a horrible sense of helplessness; it seemed as if I were doomed to abide for ever in that dreary place, girdled by these gray rocks scooped and honey-combed by the washing of the bitter seas—were cut off from friends, profession, and delights of social intercourse, as if spirited away to fairyland. I felt myself growing a fisherman, like the men about me; Gaelic seemed forming on my tongue. Fellowes, meanwhile, with that admirable practical philosophy of his, had lit a cigar, and was chatting away

with the landlady about the population of the village, the occupations of the inhabitants, their ecclesiastical history. I awoke from my gloomy dream as she replied to a question of his—"The last minister was put awa for drinkin'; but we've got a new ane, a Mr Cammil, an' verra weel liket he is." The words were a ray of light, and suggested a possible deliverance. I slapped him on the shoulder, crying, "I have it! There was a fellow-student of mine in Glasgow, a Mr Donald Campbell, and it runs in my mind that he was preferred to a parish in the Highlands somewhere; what if this should prove the identical man? Let us call upon him." The chances were not very much in our favour; but our circumstances were desperate, and the thing was worth trying. The landlady sent her son with us to point the way. We knocked, were admitted, and shown to the tiny drawing-room. While waiting, I observed a couple of photograph cases on the table. These I opened. One contained the portrait of a gentleman in a white neckcloth, evidently a clergyman; the other that of a lady, in all likelihood his spouse. Alas! the gentleman bore no resemblance to *my* Mr Campbell: the lady I did not know. I laid the cases down in disappointment, and began to frame an apology for our singular intrusion, when

the door opened—and my old friend entered. He greeted us cordially, and I wrung his hand with fervour. I told him our adventure with the Jean-Town boatmen, and our consequent helplessness; at which he laughed, and offered his cart to convey ourselves and luggage to Kyleakin ferry, which turned out to be only six miles off. Genial talk about college scenes and old associates brought on the hour of luncheon; that concluded, the cart was at the door. In it our things were placed; farewells were uttered, and we departed. It was a wild, picturesque road along which we moved; sometimes comparatively smooth, but more frequently rough and stony, as the dry torrent's bed. Black dreary wastes spread around. Here and there we passed a colony of turf-huts, out of which wild ragged children, tawny as Indians, came trooping, to stare upon us as we passed. But the journey was attractive enough; for before us rose a permanent vision of mighty hills, with their burdens of cloudy rack; and every now and then, from an eminence, we could mark, against the land, the blue of the sea flowing in, bright with sunlight. We were once more on our way; the minister's mare went merrily; the breeze came keen and fresh against us; and in less than a couple of hours we reached Kyleakin.

KYLEAKIN

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The ferry is a narrow passage between the mainland and Skye; the current is powerful there, difficult to pull against on gusty days; and the ferrymen are loath to make the attempt unless well remunerated. When we arrived, we found four passengers waiting to cross; and as their appearance gave prospect of an insufficient supply of coin, they were left sitting on the bleak windy rocks until some others should come up. It was as easy to pull across for ten shillings as for two! One was a girl, who had been in service in the south, had taken ill there, and was on her way home to some wretched turf-hut on the hill-side, in all likelihood to die; the second a little cheery Irishwoman, with a basketful of paper ornaments, with the gaudy colours and ingenious devices of which she hoped to tickle the æsthetic sensibilities, and open the purses, of the Gael. The third and fourth were men, apparently laborious ones; but the younger informed me he was a schoolmaster, and it came out incidentally in conversation that his schoolhouse was a turf-cabin, his writing-table a trunk, on which his pupils wrote by turns. Imagination sees his young kilted friends kneeling on the clay floor, laboriously forming pot-hooks there, and squinting horribly the while. The ferrymen began to bestir themselves when we came up; and

in a short time the boat was ready, and the party embarked. The craft was crank, and leaked abominably, but there was no help; and our bags were deposited in the bottom. The schoolmaster worked an oar in lieu of payment. The little Irishwoman, with her precious basket, sat high in the bow, the labourer and the sick girl behind us at the stern. With a strong pull of the oars we shot out into the seething water. In a moment the Irishwoman is brought out in keen relief against a cloud of spray; but, nothing daunted, she laughs out merrily, and seems to consider a ducking the funniest thing in the world. In another, I receive a slap in the face from a gush of blue water, and emerge, half-blinded, and soaked from top to toe. Ugh, this sea-waltz is getting far from pleasant. The leak is increasing fast, and our carpet-bags are well-nigh afloat in the working bilge. We are all drenched now. The girl is sick, and Fellowes is assisting her from his brandy-flask. The little Irishwoman, erst so cheery and gay, with spirits that turned every circumstance into a quip and crank, has sunk in a heap at the bow; her basket is exposed, and the ornaments, shaped by patient fingers out of coloured papers, are shapeless now; the looped rosettes are ruined; her stock-in-trade, pulp—a misfortune great to her

as defeat to an army, or a famine to a kingdom. But we are more than half-way across, and a little ahead the water is comparatively smooth. The boatmen pull with greater ease; the uncomfortable sensation at the pit of the stomach is redressed; the white lips of the girl begin to redden somewhat; and the bunch forward stirs itself, and exhibits signs of life. Fellowes bought up the contents of her basket; and a contribution of two-and-sixpence from myself made the widow's heart to sing aloud for joy. On landing, our luggage is conveyed in a cart to the inn, and waits our arrival there. Meanwhile we warm our chilled limbs with a caulker of Glenlivet. "Blessings be with it, and eternal praise." How the fine spirit melts into the wandering blood, like "a purer light in light!" How the soft benignant fire streams through the labyrinthine veins, from brain to toe! The sea is checkmated; the heart beats with a fuller throb; and the impending rheumatism flies afar. When we reached the inn, we seized our luggage, in the hope of procuring dry garments. Alas! when I went up-stairs, mine might have been the carpet-bag of a merman; it was wet to the inmost core.

Soaked to the skin, it was our interest to proceed without delay. We waited on the landlord,

and desired a conveyance. The landlord informed us that the only vehicle which he possessed was a phæton, at present on hire till the evening, and advised us, now that it was Saturday, to remain in his establishment till Monday, when he could send us on comfortably. To wait till Monday, however, would never do. We told the man our story, how for two days we had been the sport of fortune, tossed hither and thither; but he—feeling he had us in his power—would render no assistance. We wandered out toward the rocks to hold a consultation, and had almost resolved to leave our things where they were, and start on foot, when a son of the innkeeper's joined us. He—whether cognisant of his parent's statement, I cannot say—admitted that there were a horse and gig in the stable; that he knew Mr M'Ian's place, and offered to drive us to a little fishing village within three miles of it, where our things could be left, and a cart sent to bring them up in the evening. The charge was —never mind what!—but we closed with it at once. We entered the inn while our friend went round to the stable to bring the machine to the door; met the landlord on the stairs, sent an indignant broadside into him, which he received with the utmost coolness. The imperturbable man! he swallowed our shot like a sandbank, and was nothing the

worse. The horse was now at the door, in a few moments our luggage was stowed away, and we were off. Through seventeen miles of black moorland we drove almost without beholding a single dwelling. Sometimes, although rarely, we had a glimpse of the sea. The chief object that broke the desolation was a range of clumsy red hills, stretching away like a chain of gigantic dust-heaps. Their aspect was singularly dreary and depressing. They were mountain *plebs*. Lava hardens into grim precipice, bristles into jagged ridge, along which the rack drives, now hiding, now revealing it; but these had no beauty, no terror, ignoble from the beginning; dull offspring of primeval mud. About seven P.M. we reached the village, left our things, still soaked in sea-water, in one of the huts, till Mr M'Ian could send for them, and struck off on foot for the three miles which we were told yet remained. By this time the country had improved in appearance. The hills were swelling and green; up these the road wound, fringed with ferns, mixed with the purple bells of the foxglove. A stream, too, evidently escaped from some higher mountain tarn, came dashing along in a succession of tiny waterfalls. A quiet pastoral region, but so still, so deserted! Hardly a house, hardly a human being! After a while we

reached the lake, half covered with water-lilies, and our footsteps startled a brood of wild-ducks on its breast. How lonely it looked in its dark hollow there, familiar to the cry of the wild bird, the sultry summer-cloud, the stars and meteors of the night—strange to human faces, and the sound of human voices. But what of our three miles? We have been walking for an hour and a half. Are we astray in the green wilderness? The idea is far from pleasant. Happily a youthful native came trotting along, and of him we inquired our way. The boy looked at us, and shook his head. We repeated the question, still the same shy puzzled look. A proffer of a shilling, however, quickened his apprehension, and returning with us a few paces, he pointed out a hill-road striking up through the moor. On asking the distance, he seemed put out for a moment, and then muttered, in his difficult English, "Four mile." Nothing more could be procured in the way of information; so off went little Bare-legs, richer than ever he had been in his life, at a long swinging trot, which seemed his natural pace, and which, I suppose, he could sustain from sunrise to sunset. To this hill-road we now addressed ourselves. It was sunset now. Up we went through the purple moor, and in a short time sighted a crimson tarn, bordered

with long black rushes, and as we approached, a duck burst from its face on "squattering" wings, shaking the splendour into widening circles. Just then two girls came on the road with peats in their laps: anxious for information, we paused—they, shy as heath-hens, darted past, and, when fifty yards' distant, wheeled suddenly round, and burst into shrieks of laughter, repeated and re-repeated. In no laughing mood we pursued our way. The road now began to dip, and we entered a glen plentifully covered with birchwood, a stream keeping us company from the tarn above. The sun was now down, and objects at a distance began to grow uncertain in the evening mist. The horrible idea that we had lost our way, and were doomed to encamp on the heather, grew upon us. On! on! We had walked six miles since our encounter with the false Bare-legs. Suddenly we heard a dog bark; that was a sign of humanity, and our spirits rose. Then we saw a troop of horses galloping along the bottom of the glen. Better and better. "'Twas an honest ghost, Horatio!" All at once we heard the sound of voices, and Fellowes declared he saw something moving on the road. The next moment M'Ian and a couple of shepherds started out of the gloom. At sight of them our hearts burned within us, like a newly-poked

fire. Sincere was the greeting, immense the shaking of hands; and the story of our adventures kept us merry till we reached the house.

Of our doughty deeds at supper I will not sing, nor state how the toddy-jugs were drained. Rather let me tell of those who sat with us at the board—the elder Mr M'Ian, and Father M'Crimmon, then living in the house. Mr M'Ian, senior, was a man past eighty, but fresh and hale for his years. His figure was slight and wiry, his face a fresh pink, his hair like snow. Age, though it had bowed him somewhat, had not been able to steal the fire from his eye, nor the vigour from his limbs. He entered the army at an early age; carried colours in Ireland before the century came in; was with Moore at Corunna; followed Wellington through the Peninsular battles; was with the 42d at Quatre Bras, and hurt there when the brazen cuirassiers came charging through the tall rye-grass; and, finally, stood at Waterloo in a square that crumbled before the artillery and cavalry charges of Napoleon—crumbled, but never flinched! It was strange to think that the old man across the table breathed the same air with Marie-Antoinette; saw the black cloud of the French Revolution torn to pieces with its own lightnings, the eagles of Napoleon flying from Madrid to Moscow, Wellington's

victorious career—all that wondrous time which our fathers and grandfathers saw, which has become history now, wearing the air of antiquity almost. We look upon the ground out yonder from Brussels, that witnessed the struggle; but what the insensate soil, the woods, the monument, to the living eye in which was pictured the fierce strife? to the face that was grimed with the veritable battle-smoke? to the voice that mingled in the last cheer, when the whole English line moved forward at sunset? M'Ian was an isle-man of the old school; penetrated through every drop of blood with pride of birth, and with a sense of honour which was like a second conscience. He had all the faults incidental to such a character. He was stubborn as the gnarled trunk of the oak, full of prejudices which our enlightenment laughs at, but which we need not despise, for with our knowledge and our science, well will it be for us if we go to our graves with as stainless a name. He was quick and hasty of temper, and contradiction brought fire from him like steel from flint. Short and fierce were his gusts of passion. I have seen him of an evening, with quivering hands and kindling eye, send a volley of oaths into a careless servant, and the next moment almost the reverend white head was bowed on his chair as he knelt at

evening prayer. Of these faults, however, this evening we saw nothing. The old gentleman was kind and hospitable; full of talk, but his talk seemed to us of old-world things. On Lords Palmerston and Derby he was silent; he was eloquent on Mr Pitt and Mr Fox. He talked of the French Revolution and the actors thereof as contemporaries. Of the good Queen Victoria (for history is sure to call her that) he said nothing. His heart was with his memory, in the older days when George III. was king, and not an old king neither.

Father M'Crimmon was a tall man, being in height considerably above six feet. He was thin, like his own island, where the soil is washed away by the rain, leaving bare the rock. His face was mountainously bony, with great pits and hollows in it. His eyes were gray, and had that depth of melancholy in them which is so often observed in men of his order. In heart he was simple as a child; in discourse slow, measured, and stately. There was something in his appearance that suggested the silence and solitude of the wilderness; of hours lonely to the heart, and bare spaces lonely to the eye. Although of another, and—as I think, else I should not profess it—a purer faith, I respected him at first, and loved him almost when I

came to know him. Was it wonderful that his aspect was sorrowful, that it wore a wistful look, as if he had lost something which could never be regained, and that for evermore the sunshine was stolen from his smile? He was by his profession cut off from all the sweet ties of human nature, from all love of wife or child. His people were widely scattered: across the black moor, far up the hollow glens, blustering with winds or dimmed with the rain-cloud. Thither the grim man followed them, officiating on rare festival occasions of marriage and christening; his face bright, not like a window ruddy with a fire within, rather like a wintry pane tinged by the setting sun—a brief splendour that warms not, and but divides the long cold day that has already passed from the long cold night to come. More frequently he was engaged dispensing alms, giving advice in disaster, waiting by the low pallets of the fever-stricken, listening to the confession of long-hoarded guilt, comforting the dark spirit as it passed to its audit. It is not with viands like these you furnish forth life's banquet; not on materials like these you rear brilliant spirits and gay manners. He who looks constantly on death and suffering, and the unspiritual influences of hopeless poverty, becomes infected with congenial gloom. Yet cold and cheerless as

may be his life, he has his reward; for in his wanderings through the glens there is not an eye but brightens at his approach, not a mourner but feels he has a sharer in his sorrow; and when the tall, bony, seldom-smiling man is borne at last to his grave, round many a fireside will tears fall and prayers be said for the good priest M'Crimmon

All night sitting there, we talked of strange

> "Unhappy far-off things,
> And battles long ago,"

blood-crusted clan quarrels, bitter wrongs and terrible revenges: of wraiths and bodings, and pale death-lights burning on the rocks. The conversation was straightforward and earnest, conducted with perfect faith in the subject-matter; and I listened, I am not ashamed to confess, with a curious and not altogether unpleasant thrill of the blood. For, I suppose, however sceptical as to ghosts the intellect may be, the blood is ever a believer as it runs chill through the veins. A new world and order of things seemed to gather round us as we sat there. One was carried away from all that makes up the present—the policy of Napoleon III., the death of President Lincoln, the character of his successor, the universal babblement of scandal and personal talk—and brought face to face with tradition; with the ongoings of men who lived in solitary places,

whose ears were constantly filled with the *sough* of the wind, the clash of the wave on the rock ; whose eyes were open on the flinty cliff, and the floating forms of mists, and the dead silence of pale sky dipping down far off on the dead silence of black moor. One was taken at once from the city streets to the houseless wilderness; from the smoky sky to the blue desert of air stretching from mountain range to mountain range, with the poised eagle hanging in the midst, stationary as a lamp. Perhaps it was the faith of the speakers that impressed me most. To them the stories were much a matter of course; the supernatural atmosphere had become so familiar to them that it had been emptied of all its wonder and the greater part of its terror. Of this I am quite sure, that a ghost story, told in the pit of a theatre, or at Vauxhall, or walking through a lighted London street, is quite a different thing from a ghost story told, as I heard it, in a lone Highland dwelling, cut off from every habitation by eight miles of gusty wind, the sea within a hundred feet of the walls, the tumble of the big wave, and the rattle of the pebbles, as it washes away back again, distinctly heard where you sit, and the talkers making the whole matter "stuff o' the conscience." Very different! You laugh in the

theatre, and call the narrator an ass; in the other case you listen silently, with a scalp creeping as if there were a separate life in it, and the blood streaming coldly down the back.

Young M'Ian awoke me next morning. As I came down stairs he told me, had it not been Sunday he would have roused me with a performance on the bagpipes. Heaven forfend! I never felt so sincere a Sabbatarian. He led me some little distance to a favourable point of rock, and, lo! across a sea, sleek as satin, rose a range of hills, clear against the morning, jagged and notched like an old sword-blade. "Yonder," said he, pointing, "beyond the black mass in front, just where the shower is falling, lies Lake Coruisk. I'll take you to see it one of these days."

AT MR M'IAN'S.

THE farm which Mr M'Ian rented was, in comparison with many others in the island, of but moderate extent; and yet it skirted the sea-shore for a considerable distance, and comprised within itself many a rough hill, and many a green valley. The house was old-fashioned, was *harled* all over with lime, and contained a roomy porch, over which ivies clustered, a dining-room, a drawing-room, a lot of bedrooms, and behind, and built out from the house, an immense kitchen, with a flagged floor and a huge fire-place. A whole colony of turf-huts, with films of blue smoke issuing from each, were scattered along the shore, lending a sort of homely beauty to the wild picturesqueness. Beside the house, with a ruined summer-seat at one end, was a large carelessly-kept garden, surrounded by a high stone wall. M'Ian kept the key himself; and on the garden door were nailed ravens, and other feathered malefactors in different stages of decay. Within a stone's throw from the porch, were one

or two barns, a stable, a wool-house, and other out-houses, in which several of the servants slept. M'Ian was careful of social degree, and did not admit every one to his dining-room. He held his interviews with the common people in the open air in front of the house. When a drover came for cattle he dined solitarily in the porch, and the dishes were sent to him from M'Ian's table. The drover was a servant, consequently he could not sit at meat with my friend; he was more than a servant for the nonce, inasmuch as he was his master's representative, and consequently he could not be sent to the kitchen—the porch was therefore a kind of convenient middle place; neither too high nor too humble, it was, in fact, a sort of social purgatory. But Mr M'Ian did not judge a man by the coat he wore, nor by the amount of money in his purse. When Mr Macara, therefore, the superannuated schoolmaster, who might have been a licentiate of the Church thirty years before, had he not brought his studies in divinity to a close by falling in love, marrying, and becoming the father of a large family; or when Peter, the meek-faced violinist, who was of good descent, being the second cousin of a knight-bachelor on his mother's side, and of an Indian general on his father's—when these men

called at the house, they dined — with obvious trepidation, and sitting at an inconvenient distance, so that a morsel was occasionally lost on its passage from plate to mouth—at M'Ian's own table ; and to them the old gentleman, who would have regarded the trader worth a million as nothing better than a scullion, talked of the old families and the old times. M'Ian valued a man for the sake of his grandfather rather than for the sake of himself. The shepherds, the shepherds' dogs, and the domestic servants, dined in the large kitchen. The kitchen was the most picturesque apartment in the house. There was a huge dresser near the small dusty window ; in a dark corner stood a great cupboard in which crockery was stowed away. The walls and rafters were black with peat smoke. Dogs were continually sleeping on the floor with their heads resting on their outstretched paws ; and from a frequent start and whine, you knew that in dream they were chasing a flock of sheep along the steep hill-side, their masters shouting out orders to them from the valley beneath. The fleeces of sheep which had been found dead on the mountain were nailed on the walls to dry. Braxy hams were suspended from the roof ; strings of fish were hanging above the fire-place. The door was almost continually

open, for by the door light mainly entered. Amid a savoury steam of broth and potatoes, the shepherds and domestic servants drew in long backless forms to the table, and dined innocent of knife and fork, the dogs snapping and snarling among their legs; and when the meal was over the dogs licked the platters. Macara, who was something of a poet, would, on his occasional visits, translate Gaelic poems for me. On one occasion, after one of these translations had been read, I made the remark that a similar set of ideas occurred in one of the songs of Burns. His gray eyes immediately blazed up; he rushed into a Gaelic recitation of considerable length; and, at its close, snapping defiant fingers in my face, demanded, "Can you produce anything out of your Shakespeare or your Burns equal to *that?*" Of course, I could not; and I fear I aggravated my original offence by suggesting that in all likelihood my main inability to produce a passage of corresponding excellence from the southern authors arose from my entire ignorance of the language of the native bard. When Peter came with his violin the kitchen was cleared after nightfall; the forms were taken away, candles stuck into the battered tin sconces, the dogs unceremoniously kicked out, and a somewhat ample ballroom was the result.

Then in came the girls, with black shoes and white stockings, newly-washed faces and nicely-smoothed hair; and with them came the shepherds and men-servants, more carefully attired than usual. Peter took his seat near the fire; M'Ian gave the signal by clapping his hands; up went the inspiriting notes of the fiddle and away went the dancers, man and maid facing each other, the girl's feet twinkling beneath her petticoat, not like two mice, but rather like a dozen; her kilted partner pounding the flag-floor unmercifully; then man and maid changed step, and followed each other through loops and chains; then they faced each other again, the man whooping, the girl's hair coming down with her exertions; then suddenly the fiddle changed time, and with a cry the dancers rushed at each other, each pair getting linked arm in arm, and away the whole floor dashed into the whirlwind of the reel of Hoolichan. It was dancing with a will,—lyrical, impassioned; the strength of a dozen fiddlers dwelt in Peter's elbow; M'Ian clapped his hands and shouted, and the stranger was forced to mount the dresser to get out of the way of whirling kilt and tempestuous petticoat.

Chief amongst the dancers on these occasions were John Kelly, Lachlan Roy, and Angus-with-

the-dogs. John Kelly was M'Ian's principal shepherd — a swarthy fellow, of Irish descent, I fancy, and of infinite wind, endurance, and capacity of drinking whisky. He was a solitary creature, irascible in the extreme; he crossed and re-crossed the farm I should think some dozen times every day, and was never seen at church or market without his dog. With his dog only was John Kelly intimate, and on perfectly confidential terms. I often wondered what were his thoughts as he wandered through the glens at early morning, and saw the fiery mists upstreaming from the shoulders of Blaavin; or when he sat on a sunny knoll at noon smoking a black broken pipe, and watching his dog bringing a flock of sheep down the opposite hill-side. Whatever they were, John kept them strictly to himself. In the absorption of whisky he was without a peer in my experience, although I have in my time encountered some rather distinguished practitioners in that art. If you gave John a glass of spirits, there was a flash, and it was gone. For a wager I once beheld him drink a bottle of whisky in ten minutes. He drank it in cupfuls, saying never a word. When it was finished, he wrapt himself in his plaid, went out with his dog, and slept all night on the hill-side. I suppose a natural instinct told him that

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the night air would decompose the alcohol for him. When he came in next morning his swarthy face was a shade paler than was its wont; but he seemed to suffer no uneasiness, and he tackled to his breakfast like a man.

Lachlan Roy was a little cheery, agile, red squirrel of a man, and like the squirrel, he had a lot of nuts stowed away in a secret hole against the winter time. A more industrious little creature I have never met. He lived near the old castle of Dunsciach, where he rented a couple of crofts or so; there he fed his score or two of sheep, and his half dozen of black cattle; and from thence he drove them to Broadford market twice or thrice in the year, where they were sure to fetch good prices. He knew the points of a sheep or a stirk as well as any man in the island. He was about forty-five, had had a wife and children, but they had all died years before; and although a widower, Lachlan was as jolly, as merry-eyed and merry-hearted as any young bachelor shepherd in the country. He was a kindly soul too, full of pity, and was constantly performing charitable offices for his neighbours in distress. A poor woman in his neighbourhood had lost her suckling child, and Lachlan came up to M'Ian's house with tears in his eyes, seeking some simple cordials

and a bottle of wine. "Ay, it's a sad thing, Mr M'Ian," he went on, "when death takes a child from the breast. A full breast and an empty knee, Mr M'Ian, makes a desolate house. Poor Mirren has a terrible rush of milk, and cold is the lip to-day that could relieve her. And she's all alone too, Mr M'Ian, for her husband is at Stornoway after the herring." Of course he got the cordials and the wine, and of course, in as short a space of time as was possible, the poor mother, seated on an upturned creel, and rocking herself to and fro over her clasped hands, got them also, with what supplementary aid Lachlan's own stores could afford. Lachlan was universally respected; and when he appeared every door opened cheerfully. At all dance gatherings at M'Ian's he was certain to be present; and old as he was comparatively, the prettiest girl was glad to have him for a partner. He had a merry wit, and when he joked, blushes and titterings overspread in a moment all the young women's faces. On such occasions I have seen John Kelly sitting in a corner gloomily biting his nails, jealousy eating his heart. But Lachlan cared nothing for John's mutinous countenance—he meant no harm, and he feared no man. Lachlan Roy, being interpreted, means red Lachlan; and this cognomen not only drew

its appropriateness from the colour of his hair and beard; it had, as I afterwards learned, a yet deeper significance. Lachlan, if the truth must be told, had nearly as fierce a thirst for strong waters as John Kelly himself, and that thirst on fair days, after he had sold his cattle at Broadford, he was wont plentifully to slake. His face, under the influence of liquor, became red as a harvest moon; and as of this physiological peculiarity in himself he had the most perfect knowledge, he was under the impression that if he drew rein on this side of high alcoholic inflammation of countenance he was safe, and on the whole rather creditably virtuous than otherwise. And so, perhaps, he would have been, had he been able to judge for himself, or had he been placed amongst boon companions who were ignorant of his weakness, or who did not wish to deceive him. Somewhat suspicious, when a fresh jorum was placed on the table, he would call out—"Donald, is my face red yet?" Donald, who was perfectly aware of the ruddy illumination, would hypocritically reply, "Hoot, Lachlan dear, what are ye speaking about? Your face is just its own natural colour. What should it be red for?" "Duncan, you scoundrel," he would cry fiercely at a later period, bringing his clenched fist down

on the table, and making the glasses dance—"Duncan, you scoundrel, look me in the face!" Thus adjured, Duncan would turn his uncertain optics on his flaming friend. "Is my face red yet, Duncan?" Duncan, too far gone for speech, would shake his head in the gravest manner, plainly implying that the face in question was *not* red, and that there was not the least likelihood that it would ever become red. And so, from trust in the veracity of his fellows, Lachlan was, at Broadford, brought to bitter grief twice or thrice in the year.

Angus-with-the-dogs was continually passing over the country like the shadow of a cloud. If he had a home at all, it was situated at Ardvasar, near Armadale; but there Angus was found but seldom. He was always wandering about with his gun over his shoulder, his terriers, Spoineag and Fruich, at his heels, and the kitchen of every tacksman was open to him. The tacksmen paid Angus so much per annum, and Angus spent his time in killing their vermin. He was a dead shot; he knew the hole of the fox, and the cairn in which an otter would be found. If you wanted a brace of young falcons, Angus would procure them for you; if ravens were breeding on one of your cliffs, you had but to wait till the young ones

were half-fledged, send for Angus, and before evening the entire brood, father and mother included, would be nailed on your barn door. He knew the seldom-visited loch up amongst the hills which was haunted by the swan, the cliff of the Cuchullins on which the eagles dwelt, the place where, by moonlight, you could get a shot at the shy heron. He knew all the races of dogs. In the warm blind pup he saw, at a glance, the future terrier or staghound. He could cure the distemper, could crop ears and dock tails. He could cunningly plait all kinds of fishing tackle; could carve *quaichs*, and work you curiously-patterned dagger-hilts out of the black bog-oak. If you wished a tobacco-pouch made of the skin of an otter or a seal, you had simply to apply to Angus. From his variety of accomplishment he was an immense favourite. The old farmers liked him because he was the sworn foe of pole-cats, foxes, and ravens; the sons of farmers valued him because he was an authority in rifles and fowling-pieces, and knew the warm shelving rocks on which bullet-headed seals slept, and the cairns on the sea-shore in which otters lived; and because if any special breed of dog was wanted he was sure to meet the demand. He was a little, thick-set fellow, of great physical strength, and

of the most obliging nature; and he was called Angus-with-the-dogs, because without Spoineag and Fruich at his heels, he was never seen. The pipe was always in his mouth,—to him tobacco smoke was as much a matter of course as peat reek is to a turf-hut.

One day, after Fellowes had gone to the Landlord's, where I was to join him in a week or ten days, young M'Ian and myself waited for Angus-with-the-dogs on one of the rising grounds at a little distance from the house. Angus in his peregrinations had marked a cairn in which he thought an otter would be found, and it was resolved that this cairn should be visited on a specified day about noon, in the hope that some little sport might be provided for the Sassenach. About eleven A.M., therefore, on the specified day we lay on the heather smoking. It was warm and sunny; M'Ian had thrown beside him on the heather his gun and shot-belt, and lay back luxuriously on his fragrant couch, meerschaum in mouth, his Glengary bonnet tilted forward over his eyes, his left leg stretched out, his right drawn up, and his brown hands clasped round the knee. Of my own position, which was comfortable enough, I was not at the moment specially cognisant; my attention being absorbed by the scenery around, which

was wild and strange. We lay on couches of purple heather, as I have said ; and behind were the sloping birch-woods—birch-woods always remind one somehow of woods in their teens—which ran up to the bases of white cliffs traversed only by the shepherd and the shadows of hawks and clouds. The plateau on which we lay ran toward the sea, and suddenly broke down to it in little ravines and gorges, beautifully grassed and mossed, and plumed with bunches of ferns. Occasionally a rivulet came laughing and dancing down from rocky shelf to shelf. Of course, from the spot where we lay, this breaking down of the hill-face was invisible, but it was in my mind's eye all the same, for I had sailed along the coast and admired it a couple of days before. Right in front flowed in Loch Eishart, with its islands and white sea-birds. Down in the right-hand corner, reduced in size by distance, the house sat on its knoll, like a white shell ; and beside it were barns and outhouses, the smoking turf-huts on the shore, the clumps of birch-wood, the thread of a road which ran down toward the stream from the house, crossed it by a bridge a little beyond the turf-huts and the boat-shed, and then came up towards us till it was lost in the woods. Right across the Loch were the round

red hills that rise above Broadford ; and the entire range of the Cuchullins—the outline wild, splintered, jagged, as if drawn by a hand shaken by terror or frenzy. A glittering mesh of sunlight stretched across the Loch, blinding, palpitating, ever-dying, ever-renewed. The bee came booming past, the white sea-gull swept above, silent as a thought or a dream. Gazing out on all this, somewhat lost in it, I was suddenly startled by a sharp whistle, and then I noticed that a figure was crossing the bridge below. M'Ian got up ; "That's Angus," he said ; "let us go down to meet him ;" and so, after knocking the ashes out of his pipe and filling it anew, picking up his gun and slinging his shot-belt across his shoulder, he led the way.

At the bridge we found Angus seated, with his gun across his knee, and Spoineag and Fruich coursing about, and beating the bushes, from which a rabbit would occasionally bounce and scurry off. Angus looked more alert and intelligent than I had ever before seen him—probably because he had business on hand. We started at once along the shore at the foot of the cliffs above which we had been lying half an hour before. Our way lay across large boulders which had rolled down from the heights above, and

progression, at least to one unaccustomed to such rough work, was by no means easy. Angus and M'Ian stepped on lightly enough, the dogs kept up a continual barking and yelping, and were continually disappearing in rents and crannies in the cliffs, and emerging more ardent than ever. At a likely place Angus would stop for a moment, speak a word or two to the dogs, and then they rushed barking at every orifice, entered with a struggle, and ranged through all the passages of the hollow cairn. As yet the otter had not been found at home. At last when we came in view of a spur of the higher ground which, breaking down on the shore, terminated in a sort of pyramid of loose stones, Angus dashed across the broken boulders at a run, followed by his dogs. When they got up, Spoineag and Fruich, barking as they had never barked before, crept in at all kinds of holes and impossible fissures, and were no sooner out than they were again in. Angus cheered and encouraged them, and pointed out to M'Ian traces of the otter's presence. I sat down on a stone and watched the behaviour of the terriers. If ever there was an insane dog, it was Fruich that day; she jumped and barked, and got into the cairn by holes through which no other dog could go, and came out by

holes through which no other dog could come. Spoineag, on the other hand, was comparatively composed ; he would occasionally sit down, and taking a critical view of the cairn, run barking to a new point, and to that point Fruich would rush like a fury and disappear. Spoineag was a commander-in-chief, Fruich was a gallant general of division. Spoineag was Wellington, Fruich was the fighting Picton. Fruich had disappeared for a time, and from the muffled barking we concluded she was working her way to the centre of the citadel, when all at once Spoineag, as if moved by a sudden inspiration, rushed to the top of the cairn, and began tearing up the turf with teeth and feet. Spoineag's eagerness now was as intense as ever Fruich's had been. Angus, who had implicit faith in Spoineag's genius, climbed up to assist, and tore away at the turf with his hands. In a minute or so Spoineag had effected an entrance from the top, and began to work his way downwards. Angus stood up against the sky with his gun in readiness. We could hear the dogs barking inside, and evidently approaching a common centre, when all at once a fell tumult arose. The otter was reached at last, and was using teeth and claws. Angus made a signal to M'Ian, who immediately brought his gun to his

shoulder. The combat still raged within, and seemed to be coming nearer. Once Fruich came out howling with a bleeding foot, but a cry from Angus on the height sent her in again. All at once the din of barking ceased, and I saw a black lurching object flit past the stones towards the sea. Crack went M'Ian's gun from the boulder, crack went Angus's gun from the height, and the black object turned half round suddenly and then lay still. It was the otter; and the next moment Spoineag and Fruich were out upon it, the fire of battle in their eyes, and their teeth fixed in its bloody throat. They dragged the carcase backwards and forwards, and seemed unable to sate their rage upon it. What ancient animosity existed between the families of otters and terriers? What wrong had been done never to be redressed? Angus came forward at last, sent Spoineag and Fruich howling right and left with his foot, seized the otter by the tail, and then over the rough boulders we began our homeward march. Our progress past the turf-huts nestling on the shore at the foot of the cliffs was a triumphal one. Old men, women, and brown half-naked children came out tc gaze upon us. When we got home the otter was laid on the grass in front of the house, where the elder M'Ian came out to inspect it,

and was polite enough to express his approval, and to declare that it was not much inferior in bulk and strength to the otters he had hunted and killed at the close of last century. After dinner young M'Ian skinned his trophy, and nailed and stretched the hide on the garden gate amid the dilapidated kites and ravens. In the evening, Angus, with his gun across his shoulder, and Spoineag and Fruich at his heels, started for that mysterious home of his which was supposed to be at Ardvasar, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Armadale Castle.

A visit to Loch Coruisk had for some little time been meditated; and in the evening of the day on which the otter was slain the boat was dragged from its shed down towards the sea, launched, and brought round to the rude pier, where it was moored for the night. We went to bed early, for we were to rise with the sun. We got up, breakfasted, and went down to the pier where two or three sturdy fellows were putting oars and rowlocks to rights, tumbling in huge stones for ballast, and carefully stowing away a couple of guns and a basket of provisions. In about an hour we were fairly afloat; the broad-backed fellows bent to their oars, and soon the house began to dwindle in the distance, the irregular winding

shores to gather into compact masses, and the white cliffs, which we knew to be a couple of miles inland, to come strangely forward, and to overhang the house and the surrounding stripes of pasturage and clumps of birchwood. On a fine morning there is not in the whole world a prettier sheet of water than Loch Eishart. Everything about it is wild, beautiful, and lonely. You drink a strange and unfamiliar air. You seem to be sailing out of the nineteenth century away back into the ninth. You are delighted, and there is no remembered delight with which you can compare the feeling. Over the Loch the Cuchullins rise crested with tumult of golden mists; the shores are green behind; and away out, towards the horizon, the Island of Rum—ten miles long at the least—shoots up from the flat sea like a pointed flame. It is a granite mass, you know, firm as the foundations of the world; but as you gaze the magic of morning light makes it a glorious apparition—a mere crimson film or shadow, so intangible in appearance you might almost suppose it to exist on sufferance, and that a breath could blow it away. Between Rum, fifteen miles out yonder, and the shores drawing together and darkening behind, with the white cliffs coming forward to stare after us, the sea is smooth, and

flushed with more varied hues than ever lived on the changing opal—dim azures, tender pinks, sleek emeralds. It is one sheet of mother-of-pearl. The hills are silent. The voice of man has not yet awoke on their heathery slopes. But the sea, literally clad with birds, is vociferous. They make plenty of noise at their work, these fellows. Darkly the cormorant shoots across our track. The air is filled with a confused medley of sweet, melancholy, and querulous notes. As we proceed, a quick head ducks; a troop of birds sinks suddenly to reappear far behind, or perhaps strips off the surface of the water, taking wing with a shrill cry of complaint. Occasionally, too, a porpoise, or "fish that hugest swims the ocean stream," heaves itself slowly out of the element, its wet sides flashing for a moment in the sunlight, and then heeling lazily over, sinks with never a ripple. As we approached the Strathaird coast, M'Ian sat high in the bow smoking, and covering with his gun every now and again some bird which came wheeling near, while the boatmen joked, and sang snatches of many-chorused songs. As the coast behind became gradually indistinct, the coast in front grew bolder and bolder. You let your hand over the side of the boat and play listlessly with the water. You

are lapped in a dream of other days. Your heart is chanting ancient verses and sagas. The northern sea wind that filled the sails of the Vikings, and lifted their locks of tarnished gold, is playing in your hair. And when the keel grates on the pebbles at Kilmaree you are brought back to your proper century and self—for by that sign you know that your voyage is over for the present, and that the way to Coruisk is across the steep hill in front.

The boat was moored to a rude pier of stones, very similar to the one from which we started a couple of hours before, the guns were taken out, so was also the basket of provisions, and then the party, in long-drawn straggling procession, began to ascend the hill. The ascent is steep and laborious. At times you wade through heather as high as your knee; at other times you find yourself in a bog, and must jump perforce from solid turf to turf. Progress is necessarily slow; and the sun coming out strongly makes the brows ache with intolerable heat. The hill-top is reached at last, and you behold a magnificent sight. Beneath, a blue Loch flows in, on the margin of which stands the solitary farm-house of Camasunary. Out on the smooth sea sleep the islands of Rum and Canna —Rum towered and mountainous, Canna flat and

fertile. On the opposite side of the Loch, and beyond the solitary farm-house, a great hill breaks down into ocean with shelf and precipice. On the right Blaavin towers up into the mists of the morning, and at his base opens the desolate Glen Sligachan, to which Glencoe is Arcady. On the left, the eye travels along the whole south-west side of the island to the Sound of Sleat, to the hills of Knoydart, to the long point of Ardnamurchan, dim on the horizon. In the presence of all this we sink down in heather or on boulder, and wipe our heated foreheads; in the presence of all this M'Ian hands round the flask, which is received with the liveliest gratitude. In a quarter of an hour we begin the descent, and in another quarter of an hour we are in the valley, and approaching the solitary farm-house. While about three hundred yards from the door a man issued therefrom and came towards us. It would have been difficult to divine from dress and appearance what order of man this was. He was evidently not a farmer, he was as evidently not a sportsman. His countenance was grave, his eye was bright, but you could make little out of either; about him there was altogether a listless and a weary look. He seemed to me to have held too constant communion with the ridges of Blaavin and the desolations of Glen

Sligachan. He was not a native of these parts, for he spoke with an English accent. He addressed us frankly, discussed the weather, told us the family was from home, and would be absent for some weeks yet; that he had seen us coming down the hill, and that, weary of rocks and sheep and sea-birds, he had come out to meet us. He then expressed a wish that we would oblige him with tobacco, that is, if we were in a position to spare any: stating that tobacco he generally procured from Broadford in rolls of a pound weight at a time; that he had finished his last roll some ten days ago, and that till this period, from some unaccountable accident, the roll, which was more than a week due, had never arrived. He feared it had got lost on the way—he feared that the bearer had been tempted to smoke a pipe of it, and had been so charmed with its exquisite flavour that he had been unable to stir from the spot until he had smoked the entire roll out. He rather thought the bearer would be about the end of the roll now, and that, conscious of his atrocious conduct, he would never appear before him, but would fly the country—go to America, or the Long Island, or some other place where he could hold his guilt a secret. He had found the paper in which the last roll had been wrapt, had smoked

that, and by a strong effort of imagination had contrived to extract from it considerable enjoyment. And so we made a contribution of bird's-eye to the tobacco-less man, for which he returned us politest thanks, and then strolled carelessly toward Glen Sligachan—probably to look out for the messenger who had been so long on the way.

"Who is our friend?" I asked of my companion. "He seems to talk in a rambling and fanciful manner."

"I have never seen him before," said M'Ian; "but I suspect he is one of those poor fellows who, from extravagance, or devotion to opium or strong waters, have made a mull of life, and who are sent here to end it in a quiet way. We have lots of them everywhere."

"But," said I, "this seems the very worst place you could send such a man to—it's like sending a man into a wilderness with his remorse. It is only in the world, amid its noise, its ambitions, its responsibilities, that men pick themselves up. Sea-birds, and misty mountains, and rain, and silence are the worst companions for such a man."

"But then, you observe, sea-birds, and misty mountains, and rain, and silence hold their tongues, and take no notice of peccadilloes. Whatever may be their faults, they are not scandal-mongers. The

doings in Skye do not cause blushes in London. The man dies here as silently as a crow; it is only a black-bordered letter, addressed in a strange hand, that tells the news; and the black-bordered epistle can be thrown into the fire—if the poor mother does not clutch at it and put it away—and no one be a bit the wiser. It is sometimes to the advantage of his friends that a man should go into the other world by the loneliest and most sequestered path."

So talking, we passed the farm-house, which, with the exception of a red-headed damsel, who thrust her head out of a barn to stare, seemed utterly deserted, and bent our steps towards the shore of the Loch. Rough grass bordered a crescent of yellow sand, and on the rough grass a boat lay on its side, its pitchy seams blistering in the early sunshine. Of this boat we immediately took possession, dragged it down to the sea margin, got in our guns and provisions, tumbled in stones for ballast, procured oars, and pushed of. We had to round the great hill which, from the other side of the valley, we had seen breaking down into the sea; and as we sailed and looked up, sheep were feeding on the green shelves, and every now and again a white smoke of sea-birds burst out clangorously from the black precipices

Slowly rounding the rocky buttress, which on stormy days the Atlantic fillips with its spray, another headland, darker still and drearier, drew slowly out to sea, and in a quarter of an hour we had passed from the main ocean into Loch Scavaig, and every pull of the oars revealed another ridge of the Cuchullins. Between these mountain ramparts we sailed, silent as a boatful of souls being conveyed to some Norse hades. The Cuchullins were entirely visible now; and the sight midway up Loch Scavaig is more impressive even than when you stand on the ruined shore of Loch Coruisk itself—for the reason, perhaps, that, sailing midway, the mountain forms have a start*ling* unexpectedness, while by the time you have pulled the whole way up, you have had time to master them to some extent, and familiarity has begun to dull the impression. In half an hour or so we disembarked on a rude platform of rock, and stepped out on the very spot on which, according to Sir Walter, the Bruce landed:

> "Where a wild stream with headlong shock
> Comes brawling down a bed of rock
> To mingle with the main."

Picking your steps carefully over huge boulder and slippery stone, you come upon the most savage scene of desolation in Britain. Conceive a large

LOCH CORUISK, SKYE

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lake filled with dark green water, girt with torn and shattered precipices; the bases of which are strewn with ruin since an earthquake passed that way, and whose summits jag the sky with grisly splinter and peak. There is no motion here save the white vapour steaming from the abyss. The utter silence weighs like a burden upon you: you feel an intruder in the place. The hills seem to possess some secret; to brood over some unutterable idea which you can never know. You cannot feel comfortable at Loch Coruisk, and the discomfort arises in a great degree from the feeling that you are outside of everything—that the thunder-splitten peaks have a life with which you cannot intermeddle. The dumb monsters sadden and perplex. Standing there, you are impressed with the idea that the mountains are silent because they are listening so intently. And the mountains *are* listening, else why do they echo our voices in such a wonderful way? Shout here like an Achilles in the trenches. Listen! The hill opposite takes up your words, and repeats them one after another, and curiously tries them over with the gravity of a raven. Immediately after, you hear a multitude of skyey voices.

"Methinks that there are spirits among the peaks."

How strangely the clear strong tones are repeated by these granite precipices! Who could conceive that Horror had so sweet a voice! Fainter and more musical they grow; fainter, sweeter, and more remote, until at last they come on your ear as if from the blank of the sky itself. M'Ian fired his gun, and it reverberated into a whole battle of Waterloo. We kept the hills busy with shouts and the firing of guns, and then M'Ian led us to a convenient place for lunching. As we trudge along something lifts itself off a rock—'tis an eagle. See how grandly the noble creature soars away. What sweep of wings! What a lord of the air! And if you cast up your eyes you will see his brother hanging like a speck beneath the sun. Under M'Ian's guidance, we reached the lunching-place, unpacked our basket, devoured our bread and cold mutton, drank our bottled beer, and then lighted our pipes and smoked—in the strangest presence. Thereafter we bundled up our things, shouldered our guns, and marched in the track of ancient Earthquake towards our boat. Embarked once again, and sailing between the rocky portals of Loch Scavaig, I said, "I would not spend a day in that solitude for the world. I should go mad before evening."

"Nonsense," said M'Ian. "Sportsmen erect

tents at Coruisk, and stay there by the week—capital trout, too, are to be had in the Loch. The photographer, with his camera and chemicals, is almost always here, and the hills sit steadily for their portraits. It 's as well you have seen Coruisk before its glory has departed. Your friend, the Landlord, talks of mooring a floating hotel at the head of Loch Scavaig full of sleeping apartments, the best of meats and drinks, and a brass band to perform the newest operatic tunes on the summer evenings. At the clangour of the brass band the last eagle will take his flight for Harris."

"The Tourist comes, and poetry flies before him as the red man flies before the white. His Tweeds will make the secret top of Sinai commonplace some day."

In due time we reached Camasunary, and drew the boat up on the rough grass beyond the yellow sand. The house looked deserted as we passed. Our friend of the morning we saw seated on a rock, smoking, and gazing up Glen Sligachan, still looking out for the appearance of his messenger from Broadford. At our shout he turned his head and waved his hand. We then climbed the hill and descended on Kilmaree. It was evening now, and as we pulled homewards across the rosy frith, I sat in the bow and watched the monstrous bulk

of Blaavin, and the wild fringe of the Cuchullins bronzed by sunset. M'Ian steered, and the rowers, as they bent to their work, sang melancholy Gaelic songs. It was eleven at night by the time we got across, and the hills we had left were yet cutting, with dull purple, a pale yellow sky; for in summer in these northern latitudes there is no proper night, only a mysterious twilight of an hour and a sparkle of short-lived stars.

Broadford Fair is a great event in the island. The little town lies on the margin of a curving bay, and under the shadow of a somewhat celebrated hill. On the crest of the hill is a cairn of stones, the burying-place of a Scandinavian woman, tradition informs me, whose wish it was to be laid high up there, that she might sleep right in the pathway of the Norway wind. In a green glen at its base stands the house of Corachatachin, breathing reminiscences of Johnson and Boswell. Broadford is a post town, containing a lime kiln, an inn, and perhaps three dozen houses in all. It is a place of great importance. If Portree is the London of Skye, Broadford is its Manchester. The markets, held four times a year, take place on a patch of moorland, about a mile from the village. Not only are cattle sold, and cash exchanged for the same, but there the Skye farmer meets his relations,

from the brother of his blood to his cousin forty times removed. To these meetings he is drawn, not only by his love of coin, but by his love of kindred, and—the *Broadford Mail* and the *Portree Advertiser* lying yet in the womb of time—by his love of gossip also. The market is the Skye-man's exchange, his family gathering, and his newspaper. From the deep sea of his solitude he comes up to breathe there, and, refreshed, sinks again. This fair at Broadford I resolved to see. The day before the market the younger M'Ian had driven some forty stirks from the hill, and these, under the charge of John Kelly and his dog, started early in the afternoon that they might be present at the rendezvous about eight o'clock on the following morning, at which hour business generally began. I saw the picturesque troop go past — wildly-beautiful brutes of all colours,—black, red, cream-coloured, dun and tan; all of a height, too, and so finely bred that, but for difference of colour, you could hardly distinguish the one from the other. What a lowing they made! how they tossed their slavering muzzles! how the breaths of each individual brute rose in a separate wreath! how John Kelly shouted and objurgated, and how his dog scoured about! At last the bellowings of the animals — the horde chanting after that

fashion their obscure "*Lochaber no more*"—grew fainter and fainter up the glen, and finally on everything the wonted silence settled down. Next morning before sunrise M'Ian and I followed in a dog-cart. We went along the glen down which Fellowes and I had come; and in the meadows over which, on that occasion, we observed a troop of horses galloping through the mist of evening, I noticed, in the beamless light that preceded sunrise, hay coops by the river side, and an empty cart standing with its scarlet poles in the air. In a field nearer, a couple of male black-cocks with a loud *whirr-rr* were knocking their pugnacious heads together. Suddenly, above the hill in front the sun showed his radiant face, the chill atmosphere was pierced and brightened by his fires, the dewy birch-trees twinkled, and there were golden flickerings on the pools of the mountain stream along whose margin our road ascended. We passed the lake near which the peat-girls had laughed at us; I took note of the very spot on which we had given Bare-legs a shilling, and related the whole story of our evening walk to my companion as we tooled along.

A mile or two after we had passed the little fishing village with which I had formerly made acquaintance, we entered on a very dismal district

of country. It was precisely to the eye what the croak of the raven is to the ear. It was an utter desolation in which nature seemed deteriorated, and at her worst. Winter could not possibly sadden the region; no spring could quicken it into flowers. The hills wore but for ornament the white streak of the torrent; the rocky soil clothed itself in heather to which the purple never came. Even man, the miracle-worker, who transforms everything he touches, who has rescued a fertile Holland from the waves, who has reared a marble Venice out of salt lagoon and marsh, was defeated there. Labour was resultless—it went no further than itself—it was like a song without an echo. A turf-hut with smoke issuing from the roof, and a patch of green round about, which reminded you of the smile of an ailing child, and which would probably ripen, so far as it was capable of ripening, by November, was all that man could wrest from nature. Gradually, however, as we proceeded, the aspect of the country changed, it began to exhibit traces of cultivation; and before long, the red hill with the Norwegian woman's cairn atop, rose before us, suggesting Broadford, and the close of the journey. In a little while the road was filled with cattle, driven forward with oath and shout. Every now and

then a dog-cart came skirring along, and infinite was the confusion, and dire the clangour of tongues, when it plunged into a herd of sheep or skittish "three-year-olds." At the entrance to the fair, the horses were taken out of the vehicles, and left, with a leathern thong fastened round their fore-legs, to limp about in search of breakfast. On either side of the road stood hordes of cattle, the wildest-looking creatures, with fells of hair hanging over their eyes, and tossing horns of preposterous dimensions. On knolls, a little apart, women with white caps and wrapped in scarlet tartan plaids, sat beside a staked cow or pony, or perhaps a dozen sheep, patiently waiting the advances of customers. Troops of horses neighed from stakes. Sheep were there, too, in restless throngs and masses, continually changing their shapes, scattering hither and thither like quicksilver, insane dogs and men flying along their edges. What a hubbub of sound! what lowing and neighing! what bleating and barking! Down in the hollow ground tents had been knocked up since dawn; there potatoes were being cooked for drovers who had been travelling all night; there also liquor could be had. To these places, I observed, contracting parties invariably repaired to solemnise a bargain. At last we reached the centre of the fair, and there

stood John Kelly and his animals, a number of drovers moving around them and examining their points. By these men my friend was immediately surrounded, and much chaffering and bargain-making ensued; visits to one of the aforesaid tents being made at intervals. It was a strange sight that rude primeval traffic. John Kelly kept a sharp eye on his beasts. Lachlan Roy passed by, and low was his salute, and broad the smile on his good-natured countenance. I wandered about aimlessly for a time, and began to weary of the noise and tumult. M'Ian had told me that he would not be able to return before noonday at earliest, and that all the while he would be engaged in bargain-making on his own account, or on the account of others, and that during those hours I must amuse myself as best I could. As the novelty of the scene wore off, I began to fear that amusement would not be possible. Suddenly lifting my eyes out of the noise and confusion, there were the solitary mountain tops, and the clear mirror of Broadford Bay, the opposite coast sleeping green in it with all its woods; and lo! the steamer from the south sliding in with her red funnel, and breaking the reflection with a track of foam, and disturbing the far-off morning silence with the thunders of her paddles. That sight solved my

difficulty for me in a moment. I thought of Dr Johnson and Boswell. "I shall go," I said, "and look at the ruins of the House of Corachatachin, that lies in the green glen beneath the red hill, on the top of which the Norse woman is buried;" and so saying I went.

To me, I confess, of all Hebridean associations, Dr Johnson's visit is the pleasantest. How the doctor ever got there is a matter for perpetual wonder. He liked books, good cheer, club-life, the roar of Fleet Street, good talk, witty companions. One cannot imagine what attractions the rainy and surge-beaten islands possessed for the author of the "Vanity of Human Wishes." Wordsworth had not yet made fashionable a love for mountain and lake, and the shapes of changing cloud. Scott had not yet thrown the glamour of romance over the northern land, from the Sark to the Fitful Head. For fine scenery Johnson did not care one rush. When Boswell in the fulness of his delight pointed out "an immense mountain," the doctor sincerely sneered, "an immense protuberance." He only cared for mountains in books, and even in books he did not care for them much. The rain-cloud, which would put Mr Ruskin into ecstasies, could only suggest to the moralist the urgent necessity of an umbrella or a coach.

Johnson loved his ease; and a visit to the Western island, was in his day a serious matter — about as serious as a visit to Kamtschatka would be in ours. In his wanderings he was exposed to rain and wind, indifferent cookery, tempestuous seas, and the conversation of persons who were neither witty nor learned—who were neither polished like Beauclerk, nor amusing like Goldsmith—and who laughed at epigram as Leviathan laughs at the shaking of the spear. I protest, when I think of the burly doctor travelling in these regions, voluntarily resigning for a while all London delights, I admire him as a very hero. Boswell commemorates certain outbreaks of petulance and spleen; but, on the whole, the great man seems to have been pleased with his adventure. Johnson found in his wanderings beautiful and high-bred women, well-mannered and cultivated men—and it is more than probable that, if he were returning to the islands to-day, he would not find those admirable human qualities in greater abundance. What puzzles me most is the courage with which the philosopher encountered the sea. I have, in a considerable steamer more than once, shivered at the heavy surge breaking on Ardnamurchan; and yet the doctor passed the place in an open boat on his way to Mull, "lying down below in philosophical

tranquillity, with a greyhound at his back to keep him warm," while poor Bozzy remained in the rain above, clinging for dear life to a rope which a sailor gave him to hold, quieting his insurgent stomach as best he could with pious considerations, and sadly disturbed when a bigger wave than usual came shouldering onward, making the boat reel, with the objections which had been taken to a particular providence — objections which Dr Hawkesworth had lately revived in his preface to "Voyages to the South Seas." Boswell's journal of the tour is delicious reading; full of amusing egotism; unconsciously comic when he speaks for himself, and at the same time valuable, memorable, wonderfully vivid and dramatic in presentment when the "Majestic Teacher of Moral and Religious Wisdom" appears. What a singular capacity the man had to exhibit his hero as he lived, and at the same time to write himself complacently down an ass! It needed a certain versatility to accomplish the feat, one would think. In both ways the most eminent success attends him. And yet the absurdity of Boswell has all the effect of the nicest art. Johnson floats, a vast galleon, in the sea of Boswell's vanity; and in contrast with the levity of the element in which it lives, its bulk and height ap-

pear all the more impressive. In Skye one is every now and again coming on the tract of the distinguished travellers. They had been at Broadford—and that morning I resolved I should go to Broadford also.

Picking my steps carefully through the fair—avoiding a flock of sheep on the one side, and a column of big-horned black cattle on the other, with some difficulty getting out of the way of an infuriated bull that came charging up the road, scattering everything right and left, a dozen blown drovers panting at its heels—I soon got quit of the turmoil, and in half an hour passed the lime-kiln, the dozen houses, the ten shops, the inn, and the church, which constitute Broadford, and was pacing along the green glen which ran in the direction of the red hills. At last I came to a confused pile of stones, near which grew a solitary tree whose back the burden of the blast had bent, and which, although not a breath of wind was stirring, could no more regain an upright position than can a round-shouldered labourer on a holiday. That confused pile of stones was all that remained of the old house of Corachatachin. I wandered around it more reverently than if it had been the cairn of a chief. It is haunted by no ghost. So far as my knowledge extends, no combat ever took

place on the spot. But there Boswell, after Dr Johnson had retired to rest, in company with some young Highland bloods—ah, me! their very grandchildren must be dead or gray by this!—brewed and quaffed five gigantic bowls of punch, with what wild talk we can fancy; and the friend of the "Majestic Teacher of Moral and Religious Wisdom" went to bed at five in the morning, and awoke with the headache of the reprobate. At noon the doctor burst in with the exclamation, "What, drunk yet?" "His tone of voice was not that of severe upbraiding," writes the penitent Bozzy, "so I was relieved a little." Did they fancy, these young men, as they sat that night and drank, that a hundred years after people would write of their doings?—that the odour of their punch-bowls would outlive themselves? No man knows what part of his life will be remembered, what forgotten. A single tear, hurriedly brushed away mayhap, is the best thing we know of Xerxes. Picking one's steps around the ruin, one thought curiously of the flushed faces which death has cooled for so long.

When I got back to the fair about noon, it was evident that a considerable stroke of business had been done. Hordes of bellowing cattle were being driven towards Broadford, and drovers were rushing about in a wonderful manner, armed with

tar-pot and stick, and smearing their peculiar mark on the shaggy hides of their purchases. Rough-looking customers enough these fellows, yet they want not means. Some of them came here this morning with £500 in their pocket-books, and have spent every paper of it, and this day three months they will return with as large a sum. As I advanced, the booths ranged along the side of the road—empty when I passed them several hours before—were plentifully furnished with confections, ribbons, and cheap jewellery, and around these fair-headed and scarlet-plaided girls swarmed thickly as bees round summer flowers.

The fair was running its full career of bargain-making, and consequent dram-drinking, rude flirtation, and meeting of friend with friend; when up the middle of the road, hustling the passengers, terrifying the cattle, came three misguided young gentlemen—medical students, I opined, engaged in botanical researches in these regions. But too plainly they had been dwellers in tents. One of them, gifted with a comic genius—his companions were desperately solemn—at one point of the road threw back the collar of his coat, after the fashion of Sambo when he brings down the applauses of the threepenny gallery, and executed a shuffle in front of a bewildered cow. Crummie backed and shied,

bent on retreat. He, agile as a cork, bobbed up and down in her front, turn whither she would, with shouts and hideous grimaces, his companions standing by the while like mutes at a funeral. The feat accomplished, the trio staggered on, amid the scornful laughter and derision of the Gael. In a little while I encountered M'Ian, who had finished his business and was anxious to be gone. "We must harness the horse ourselves," he said, "for that rascal, John Kelly, has gone off somewhere. He has been in and out of tents ever since the cattle were sold, and I trust he won't come to grief. He has a standing quarrel with the Kyle men, and may get a broken head." Elbowing our way through the crowd, we reached the dog-cart, got the horse harnessed, and were just about to start, when Lachlan Roy, his bonnet off, his countenance inflamed, came flying up. "Maister Alic, Maister Alic, is my face red yet?" cried he, as he laid his hand on the vehicle. "Red enough, Lachlan; you had better come with us, you may lose your money if you don't." "Aw, Maister Alic dear, don't say my face is red—it's no red, Maister Alic—it's no *vera* red," pled the poor fellow. "Will you come with us, or will you not?" said M'Ian, as he gathered up the reins in his hand and seized the whip. At this moment three or four drovers issued

from a tent in the neighbourhood, and Lachlan heard his name shouted. "I maun go back for my bonnet. It wouldna do to ride with gentlemen without a bonnet;" and he withdrew his hand. The drovers shouted again, and that second shout drew Lachlan towards it as the flame draws the moth. "His face will be red enough before evening," said M'Ian, as we drove away.

After we had driven about a quarter of an hour, and got entirely free of the fair, M'Ian, shading his eyes from the sun with a curved palm, suddenly exclaimed, "There's a red dog sitting by the road-side a little forward. It looks like John Kelly's." When we got up, the dog wagged its tail and whined, but retained its recumbent position. "Come out," said M'Ian. "The dog is acting the part of a sentinel, and I daresay we shall find its master about." We got out accordingly, and soon found John stretched on the heather, snoring stertorously, his neck-tie unloosened, his bonnet gone, the sun shining full on the rocky countenance of him. "He's as drunk as the Baltic," said M'Ian; "but we must get him out of this. Get up, John." But John made no response. We pinched, pulled, and thumped, but John was immovable. I proposed that some water should be poured on his face, and did procure some from a wet ditch near,

with which his countenance was splashed copiously —not to its special adornment. The muddy water only produced a grunt of dissatisfaction. "We must take him on his fighting side," said M'Ian, and then he knelt down and shouted in John's ear, "Here's a man from Kyle says he's a better man than you." John grunted inarticulate defiance. "He says he'll fight you any day you like." "Tell him to strike me, then," said John, struggling with his stupor. "He says he'll kick you." Under the insult John visibly writhed. "Kick him," whispered M'Ian, "as hard as you can. It's our only chance." I kicked, and John was erect as a dart, striking blindly out, and when he became aware against whom he was making such hostile demonstrations his hands dropped, and he stood as if he had seen a ghost. "Catch him," said M'Ian, "his rage has sobered him, he'll be drunk next moment; get him into the dog-cart at once." So the lucid moment was taken advantage of, he was hoisted into the back seat of the vehicle, his bonnet was procured—he had fallen asleep upon it—and placed on the wild head of him; we took our places, and away we started, with the red dog trotting behind. John rolled off once or twice, but there was no great harm done, and we easily got him in again. As we drove down the glen toward the house we

set him down, and advised him to dip his wildly-tangled head in the stream before he went home.

During the last few weeks I have had opportunity of witnessing something of life as it passes in the Skye wildernesses, and have been struck with its self-containedness, not less than with its remoteness. A Skye family has everything within itself. The bare mountains yield mutton, which possesses a flavour and delicacy unknown in the south. The copses swarm with rabbits ; and if a net is set over-night at the Black Island, there is abundance of fish to breakfast. The farmer grows his own corn, barley, and potatoes, digs his own peats, makes his own candles ; he tans leather, spins cloth shaggy as a terrier's pile, and a hunchbacked artist in the place transforms the raw materials into boots or shepherd garments. Twice every year a huge hamper arrives from Glasgow, stuffed with all the little luxuries of housekeeping—tea, sugar, coffee, and the like. At more frequent intervals comes a ten-gallon cask from Greenock, whose contents can cunningly draw the icy fangs of a north-easter, or take the chill out of the clammy mists.

"What want they that a king should have?"

And once a week the *Inverness Courier*, like a

window suddenly opened on the roaring sea, brings a murmur of the outer world, its politics, its business, its crimes, its literature, its whole multitudinous and unsleeping life, making the stillness yet more still. To the Islesman the dial face of the year is not artificially divided, as in cities, by parliamentary session and recess, college terms, vacations short and long, by the rising and sitting of courts of justice; nor yet, as in more fortunate soils, by imperceptible gradations of coloured light —the green flowery year deepening into the sunset of the October hollyhock; the slow reddening of burdened orchards; the slow yellowing of wheaten plains. Not by any of these, but by the higher and more affecting element of animal life, with its passions and instincts, its gladness and suffering; existence like our own, although in a lower key, and untouched by solemn issues; the same music and wail, although struck on rude and uncertain chords. To the Islesman the year rises into interest when the hills, yet wet with melted snows, are pathetic with newly-yeaned lambs, and it completes itself through the successive steps of weaning, fleecing, sorting, fattening, sale, final departure, and cash in pocket. The shepherd life is more interesting than the agricultural, inasmuch as it deals with a higher order of being; for I

suppose—apart from considerations of profit—a couchant ewe, with her young one at her side, or a ram, "with wreathed horns superb," cropping the herbage, is a more pleasing object to the æsthetic sense than a field of mangel-wurzel, flourishing ever so gloriously. The shepherd inhabits a mountain country, lives more completely in the open air, and is acquainted with all the phenomena of storm and calm, the thunder-smoke coiling in the wind, the hawk hanging stationary in the breathless blue. He knows the faces of the hills, recognises the voices of the torrents as if they were children of his own, can unknit their intricate melody as he lies with his dog beside him on the warm slope at noon, separating tone from tone, and giving this to rude crag, that to pebbly bottom. From long intercourse, every member of his flock wears to his eye its special individuality, and he recognises the countenance of a "wether" as he would the countenance of a human acquaintance. Sheep-farming is a picturesque occupation: and I think a multitude of sheep descending a hill-side, now outspreading in bleating leisure, now huddling together in the haste of fear—the dogs, urged more by sagacity than by the shepherd's voice, flying along the edges, turning, guiding, changing the shape of

the mass—one of the prettiest sights in the world.

The milking of the cows is worth going a considerable distance to see. The cows browse about on the hills all day, and at sunset they are driven into a sort of green oasis, amid the surrounding birch-wood. The rampart of rock above is dressed in evening colours, the grass is golden green; everything—animals, herds, and milkmaids are throwing long shadows. All about, the cows stand lowing in picturesque groups. The milkmaid approaches one, caresses it for a moment, draws in her stool, and in an instant the rich milk is hissing in the pail. All at once there arises a tremendous noise, and pushing through the clumps of birch-wood down towards a shallow rivulet which skirts the oasis, breaks a troop of wild-looking calves, attended by a troop of wilder-looking urchins armed with sticks and the branches of trees. The cows low more than ever, and turn their wistful eyes; the bellowing calves are halted on the further side of the rivulet, and the urchins stand in the water to keep them back. An ardent calf, however, breaks through the cordon of urchins, tumbles one into the streamlet, climbs the bank amid much Gaelic exclamation, and ambles awkwardly toward his dam. Reaching her, he makes a wild push at

the swollen udder, drinks, his tail shaking with delight; while she, turning her head round, licks his shaggy hide with fond maternal tongue. In about five minutes he is forced to desist, and with a branch-bearing urchin on each side of him, is marched across the rivulet again. One by one the calves are allowed to cross, each makes the same wild push at the udder, each drinks, the tail ecstatically quivering; and on each the dam fixes her great patient eyes, and turning licks the hide, whether it be red, black, brindled, dun, or cream-coloured. When the calves have been across the rivulet and back again, and the cows are being driven away to their accustomed pasturage, a milk-maid approaches with her pail, and holding it up, gives you to drink, as long ago Rebecca gave to drink the servant of Abraham. By this time the grass is no longer golden green; the red light has gone off the rocky ramparts, and the summer twilight is growing in the hollows, and in amongst the clumps of birch-wood. Afar you hear the noise of retiring calves and urchins. The milk-maids start off in long procession with their pails and stools. A rabbit starts out from a bush at your feet, and scurries away down the dim field. And when, following, you descend the hill-side toward the bridge you see the solemn purple of the Cuchullins cutting the yellow

pallor of evening sky—perhaps with a feeling of deeper satisfaction you notice that a light is burning in the porch of Mr M'Ian's house. "The fold," as the milking of the cows is called, is pretty enough; but the most affecting incident of shepherd life is the weaning of the lambs—affecting, because it reveals passions in the fleecy flocks, the manifestation of which we are accustomed to consider ornamental in ourselves. From all the hills men and dogs drive the flocks down into a fold, or *fank*, as it is called here, consisting of several chambers or compartments. Into these compartments the sheep are huddled, and then the separation takes place. The ewes are returned to the mountains, the lambs are driven away to some spot where the pasture is rich, and where they are watched day and night. Midnight comes with dews and stars; the lambs are peacefully couched. Suddenly they are restless, ill at ease, goaded by some sore unknown want, and seem disposed to scatter wildly in every direction; but the shepherds are wary, the dogs swift and sure, and after a little while the perturbation is allayed, and they are quiet again. Walk up now to the fank. The full moon is riding between the hills, filling the glens with lustres and floating mysterious glooms. Listen! you hear it on every side of you,

till it dies away in the silence of distance—the fleecy Rachel weeping for her children! The turf walls of the fank are in shadow, but something seems to be moving there. As you approach, it disappears with a quick short bleat, and a hurry of tiny hooves. Wonderful mystery of instinct! Affection all the more affecting that it is so wrapt in darkness, hardly knowing its own meaning. For nights and nights the creatures will be found haunting about those turfen walls seeking the young that have been taken away.

But my chief delight here is my friend, Mr M'Ian. I know that I described him when I first saw him in his own house; but knowing him better now, as a matter of course I can describe him better. He would strike one with a sense of strangeness in a city, and among men of the present generation; but here he creates no surprise—he is a natural product of the region, like the red heather, or the bed of the dried torrent. He is master of legendary lore. He knows the history of every considerable family in the island; he circulates like sap through every genealogical tree; he is an enthusiast in Gaelic poetry, and is fond of reciting compositions of native bards, his eyes lighted up, and his tongue moving glibly over the rugged clots of consonants. He has a servant cunning upon

the pipes; and, dwelling there this summer, I heard Ronald wandering near the house, solacing himself with their music: now a plaintive love-song, now a coronach for chieftain borne to his grave, now a battle march, the notes of which, melancholy and monotonous at first, would soar into a higher strain, and then hurry and madden as if beating time to the footsteps of the charging clan. I am the fool of association; and the tree under which a king has rested, the stone on which a banner was planted on the morning of some victorious or disastrous day, the house in which some great man first saw the light, are to me the sacredest things. This slight, gray, keen-eyed man —the scabbard sorely frayed now, the blade sharp and bright as ever—gives me a thrill like an old coin with its half-obliterated effigy, a Druid stone on a moor, a stain of blood on the floor of a palace. He stands before me a living figure, and history groups itself behind by way of background. He sits at the same board with me, and yet he lifted Moore at Corunna, and saw the gallant dying eyes flash up with their last pleasure when the Highlanders charged past. He lay down to sleep in the light of Wellington's watch-fires in the gorges of the Pyrenees; around him roared the death-thunders of Waterloo. There is a certain

awfulness about very old men ; they are amongst us, but not of us. They crop out of the living soil and herbage of to-day, like rocky strata bearing marks of the glacier or the wave. Their roots strike deeper than ours, and they draw sustenance from an earlier layer of soil. They are lonely amongst the young ; they cannot form new friendships, and are willing to be gone. They feel the "sublime attractions of the grave;" for the soil of churchyards once flashed kind eyes on them, heard with them the chimes at midnight, sang and clashed the brimming goblet with them ; and the present Tom and Harry are as nothing to the Tom and Harry that swaggered about and toasted the reigning belles seventy years ago. We are accustomed to lament the shortness of life ; but it is wonderful how long it is notwithstanding. Often a single life, like a summer twilight, connects two historic days. Count back four lives, and King Charles is kneeling on the scaffold at Whitehall. To hear M'Ian speak, one could not help thinking in this way. In a short run across the mainland with him this summer, we reached Culloden Moor. The old gentleman with a mournful air—for he is a great Jacobite, and wears the Prince's hair in a ring—pointed out the burial-grounds of the clans. Struck with his manner, I inquired how he came

to know their red resting-places. As if hurt, he drew himself up, laid his hand on my shoulder, saying, "Those who put them in told me." Heavens, how a century and odd years collapsed, and the bloody field—the battle-smoke not yet cleared away, and where Cumberland's artillery told the clansmen sleeping in thickest swathes—unrolled itself from the horizon down to my very feet! For a whole evening he will sit and speak of his London life; and I cannot help contrasting the young officer, who trod Bond Street with powder in his hair at the end of last century, with the old man living in the shadow of Blaavin now.

Dwellers in cities have occasionally seen a house that has the reputation of being haunted, and heard a ghost story told. City people laugh when these stories are told, even although the blood should run chill the while. But in Skye one is steeped in a ghostly atmosphere; men walk about here gifted with the second sight. There has been something weird and uncanny about the island for some centuries. Douglas, on the morning of Otterbourne, according to the ballad, was shaken with superstitious fears:—

> "But I hae dream'd a dreary dream—
> Beyond the Isle of Skye,

I saw a dead man win a fight,
And I think that man was I."

Then the whole country is full of stories of the Norwegian times and earlier—stories it might be worth Dr Dasent's while to take note of, should he ever visit the Hebrides. Skye, more particularly, is haunted of legends. It is as full of noises as Prospero's Island. One such legend, concerning Ossian and his poems, struck me a good deal. Near Mr M'Ian's place is a ruined castle, a mere hollow shell of a building, Dunscaich by name, built in Fingalian days by the chieftain Cuchullin, and so called by him in honour of his wife. The ruin stands on a rocky headland bearded by gray-green lichens. It is quite desolate, and but seldom visited. The only sounds heard there are the whistle of the salt breeze, the bleat of a strayed sheep, the cry of wheeling sea-birds. M'Ian and myself sat one summer day on the ruined stair. Loch Eishart lay calm and bright beneath, the blue expanse broken only by a creeping sail. Across the Loch rose the great red hill, in the shadow of which Boswell got drunk, on the top of which is perched the Scandinavian woman's cairn; and out of the bare heaven, down on the crests of the Cuchullins, flowed a great white vapour which gathered in the sunlight in mighty fleece

on fleece. The old gentleman was the narrator, and the legend goes as follows:—The castle was built by Cuchullin and his Fingalians in a single night. The chieftain had many retainers, was a great hunter, and terrible in war. With his own arm he broke battalions; and every night at feast the minstrel Ossian sang his exploits. Ossian, on one occasion, wandering among the hills, was attracted by strains of music which seemed to issue from a round green knoll on which the sun shone pleasantly. He sat down to listen, and was lulled asleep by the melody. He had no sooner fallen asleep than the knoll opened, and he beheld the under-world of the fairies. That afternoon and night he spent in revelry, and in the morning he was allowed to return. Again the music sounded, again the senses of the minstrel were steeped in forgetfulness; and on the sunny knoll he awoke, a gray-haired man, for into one short afternoon and evening had been crowded a hundred of our human years. In his absence the world had been entirely changed, the Fingalians were extinct, and the dwarfish race whom we now call men were possessors of the country. Longing for companionship, and weary of singing his songs to the earless rocks and sea waves, Ossian married the daughter of a shepherd, and in process of time a

little girl was born to him. Years passed on, his wife died, and his daughter, woman grown now, married a pious man—for the people were Christianised by this time—called, from his love of psalmody, Peter of the Psalms. Ossian, blind with age, and bearded like the cliff yonder, went to reside with his daughter and her husband. Peter was engaged all day in hunting, and when he came home at evening and the lamp was lighted, Ossian, sitting in a warm corner, was wont to recite the wonderful songs of his youth, and to celebrate the mighty battles and hunting feats of the big-boned Fingalians—and in these songs Cuchullin stood with his terrible spear upraised, and his beautiful wife sat amid her maids plying the distaff. To these songs Peter of the Psalms gave attentive ear, and, being something of a penman, carefully inscribed them in a book. One day Peter had been more than usually successful in the chase, and brought home on his shoulders the carcass of a huge stag. Of this stag a leg was dressed for supper, and when it was picked bare, Peter triumphantly inquired of Ossian, "In the Fingalian days you sing about, killed you ever a stag so large as this one?" Ossian balanced the bone in his hand, then sniffing intense disdain, replied, "This bone, big as you think it, could be dropped into the

hollow of a Fingalian blackbird's leg." Peter of the Psalms, enraged at what he considered an unconscionable *crammer* on the part of his father-in-law, started up, swearing that he would not peril his soul by preserving any more of his lying songs, and flung the volume in the fire: but his wife darted forward and snatched it up, half-charred, from the embers. At this conduct on the part of Peter, Ossian groaned in spirit and wished to die, that he might be saved from the envies and stupidities of the little people whose minds were as stunted as their bodies. When he went to bed he implored his ancient gods—for he was a sad heathen, and considered psalm-singing no better than the howling of dogs—to resuscitate, if but for one hour, the hounds, the stags, and the blackbirds of his youth, that he might confound and astonish the unbelieving Peter. His prayers done, he fell on slumber, and just before dawn a weight upon his breast awoke him. He put forth his hands and stroked a shaggy hide. Ossian's prayers were answered, for there, upon his breast, in the dark of the morning, was couched his favourite hound. He spoke to it, called it by name, and the faithful creature whimpered and licked his hands and face. Swiftly he got up and called his little grandson, and they went out with the hound. When they

came to the top of a little eminence, Ossian said to the child, "Put your fingers in your ears, little one, else I will make you deaf for life." The boy put his fingers in his ears, and then Ossian whistled so loud that the whole sky rang as if it had been the roof of a cave He then asked the child if he saw anything. "Oh, such large deer!" said the child. "But a small herd by the trampling of it," said Ossian; "we will let that herd pass." Presently the child called out, "Oh, *such* large deer!" Ossian bent his ear to the ground to catch the sound of their coming, and then, as if satisfied, he let slip the hound, who speedily overtook and tore down seven of the fattest. When the animals were skinned and dressed, Ossian groped his way toward a large lake, in the centre of which grew a wonderful bunch of rushes. He waded into the lake, tore up the rushes, and brought to light the great Fingalian kettle, which had lain there for more than a century. Returning to his quarry, a fire was kindled, the kettle containing the seven carcasses was placed thereupon; and soon a most savoury smell, like a general letter of invitation, flew abroad on all the winds. When the animals were stewed after the approved fashion of his ancestors, Ossian sat down to his repast. Now as since his sojourn with the fairies, and the exter-

mination of the Fingalians, he had never enjoyed a sufficient meal, it was his custom to gather up the superfluous folds of his stomach by wooden splints, nine in number. As he now fed and expanded, splint after splint was thrown away, as button after button burst on the jacket of the feasting boy in the story-book, till at last, when the kettle was emptied, he lay down on the grass perfectly satisfied, and silent as the ocean when the tide is full. Recovering himself, he gathered all the bones together—set fire to them, and the smoke which ascended made the roof of the firmament as black as the roof of the turf-hut at home. "Little one," then said Ossian, "go up to the knoll and tell me if you see anything." "A great bird is flying hither," said the child; and immediately the great Fingalian blackbird alighted at the feet of Ossian, who at once caught and throttled it. The fowl was carried home, and was in the evening dressed for supper. After it was devoured, Ossian called for the stag's thigh-bone which had been the original cause of quarrel, and before the face of the astonished and convicted Peter of the Psalms, dropped it into the hollow of the blackbird's leg. Ossian died on the night of his triumph, and the only record of his songs is the volume which Peter in his rage threw into the fire, and

from which, when half-consumed, it was rescued by his wife.

"But," said I, when the old gentleman had finished his story, "how came it that the big-boned Fingalians were extirpated during the hundred years that Ossian was asleep amongst the fairies?"

"Well," said the old gentleman, "a woman was the cause of that, just as a woman is the cause of most of the other misfortunes that happen in the world. I told you that this castle was built by Cuchullin, and that he and his wife lived in it. Now tallest, bravest, strongest, handsomest of all Cuchullin's warriors was Diarmid, and many a time his sword was red with the blood of the little people who came flocking over here from Ireland in their wicker and skin-covered boats. Now, when Diarmid took off his helmet at feast, there was a fairy mole right in the centre of his forehead, just above the eyes and between his curling locks; and on this beauty spot no woman could look without becoming enamoured of him. One night Cuchullin gave a feast in the castle; the great warrior was invited; and while he sat at meat with his helmet off, Cuchullin's wife saw the star-like mole in the centre of his forehead, and incontinently fell in love with him. Cuchullin discovered his wife's passion, and began secretly to compass the death

of Diarmid. He could not slay him openly for fear of his tribe; so he consulted an ancient witch who lived over the hill yonder. Long they consulted, and at last they matured their plans. Now, the Fingalians had a wonderful boar which browsed in Gasken—the green glen which you know leading down to my house—and on the back of this boar there was a poisoned bristle, which, if it pierced the hand of any man, the man would certainly die. No one knew the secret of the bristle save the witch, and the witch told it to Cuchullin. One day, therefore, when the chief and his warriors were sitting on the rocks here about, the conversation was cunningly led to the boar. Cuchullin wagered the magic whistle which was slung around his neck, that the brute was so many handbreadths from the snout to the tip of the tail. Diarmid wagered the shield that he was polishing—the shield which was his mirror in peace, by the aid of which he dressed his curling locks, and with which he was wont to dazzle the eyes of his enemies on a battle day—that it was so many handbreadths less. The warriors heard the dispute and were divided in opinion; some agreeing with Cuchullin, others agreeing with Diarmid. At last it was arranged that Diarmid should go and measure the boar; so he and a number of the

warriors went. In a short time they came back laughing and saying that Diarmid had won his wager, that the length of the boar was so many handbreadths, neither more nor less. Cuchullin bit his white lips when he saw them coming; and then he remembered that he had asked them to measure the boar from the snout to the tail, being the way the pile lay; whereas, in order to carry out his design, he ought to have asked them to measure the boar *against* the pile. When, therefore, he was told that he had lost his wager, he flew into a great rage, maintained that they were all conspiring to deceive him, that the handbreadths he had wagered were the breadths of Diarmid's own hands, and declared that he would not be satisfied until Diarmid would return and measure the boar from the tip of tail to the snout. Diarmid and the rest went away; and when he reached the boar he began measuring it from the tail onward, his friends standing by to see that he was measuring properly, and counting every handbreadth. He had measured half way up the spine, when the poisoned bristle ran into his hand. 'Ah,' he said, and turned pale as if a spear had been driven into his heart. To support himself, he caught two of his friends round the neck, and in their arms he died. Then the weeping warriors raised the beautiful

corpse on their shoulders and carried it to the castle, and laid it down near the drawbridge. Cuchullin then came out, and when he saw his best warrior dead he laughed as if a piece of great good fortune had befallen him, and directed that the corpse should be carried into his wife's chamber.

"But Cuchullin had cause to repent soon after. The little black-haired people came swarming over from Ireland in their boats by hundreds and thousands, but Diarmid was not there to oppose them with his spear and shield. Every week a battle was fought, and the little people began to prevail; and by the time that Ossian made his escape from the fairies, every Fingalian, with the exception of two, slept in their big graves—and at times the peat digger comes upon their mighty bones when he is digging in the morasses."

"And the two exceptions?" said I.

"Why, that's another story," said M'Ian, "and I getting tired of legends.—Well, if you will have it, the two last Fingalians made their escape from Skye, carrying with them the magic whistle which Cuchullin wore around his neck, and took up their abode in a cave in Ross-shire. Hundreds of years after a man went into that cave, and in the half twilight of the place saw the whistle on the floor, and lifted it up. He saw it was of the

strangest workmanship, and putting it to his lips he blew it. He had never heard a whistle sound so loudly and yet so sweetly. He blew it a second time, and then he heard a voice, 'Well done, little man; blow the whistle a third time;' and turning to the place from which the sound proceeded, he saw a great rock like a man leaning on his elbow and looking up at him. 'Blow it the third time, little man, and relieve us from our bondage!' What between the voice, and the strange human-looking rock, the man got so terrified that he dropped the whistle on the floor of the cave, where it was smashed into a thousand pieces, and ran out into the daylight. He told his story; and when the cave was again visited, neither he nor his companions could see any trace of the broken whistle on the floor, nor could they discover any rock which resembled a weary man leaning on his elbow and looking up."

A BASKET OF FRAGMENTS.

THE month of August is to the year what Sunday is to the week. During that month a section of the working world rests. *Bradshaw* is consulted, portmanteaus are packed, knapsacks are strapped on, steamboats and railway carriages are crammed, and from Calais to Venice the tourist saunters and looks about him. It is absolutely necessary that the Briton should have, each year, one month's cessation from accustomed labour. He works hard, puts money in his purse, and it is his whim, when August comes, by way of recreation, to stalk deer on Highland corries, to kill salmon in Norwegian fiords, to stand on the summit of Mont Blanc, and to perambulate the pavements of Madrid, Naples, and St Petersburg. To rush over the world during vacation is a thing on which the respectable Briton sets his heart. To remain at home is to lose caste and self-respect. People do not care one rush for the Rhine; but that sacred stream they must behold each year or die. Of all the deities Fashion has the most zealous votaries.

No one can boast a more extensive martyrology. Her worshippers are terribly sincere, and many a secret penance do they undergo, and many a flagellation do they inflict upon themselves in private.

Early in the month in which English tourists descend on the Continent in a shower of gold, it has been my custom, for several years back, to seek refuge in the Hebrides. I love Loch Snizort better than the Mediterranean, and consider Duntulme more impressive than the Drachenfels. I have never seen the Alps, but the Cuchullins content me. Haco interests me more than Charlemagne. I confess to a strong affection for those remote regions. Jaded and nervous with eleven months' labour or disappointment, *there* will a man find the medicine of silence and repose. Pleasant, after poring over books, to watch the cormorant at early morning flying with outstretched neck over the bright frith; pleasant, lying in some sunny hollow at noon, to hear the sheep bleating above; pleasant at evening to listen to wild stories of the isles told by the peat-fire; and pleasantest of all, lying awake at midnight, to catch, muffled by distance, the thunder of the northern sea, and to think of all the ears the sound has filled. In Skye one is free of one's century; the present wheels away into

silence and remoteness; you see the ranges of brown shields, and hear the shoutings of the Bare Sarks.

The benefit to be derived from vacation is a mental benefit mainly. A man does not require change of air so much as change of scene. It is well that he should for a space breathe another mental atmosphere—it is better that he should get release from the familiar cares that, like swallows, build and bring forth under the eaves of his mind, and which are continually jerking and twittering about there. New air for the lungs, new objects for the eye, new ideas for the brain—these a vacation should always bring a man; and these are to be found in Skye rather than in places more remote. In Skye the Londoner is visited with a stranger sense of foreignness than in Holland or in Italy. The island has not yet, to any considerable extent, been overrun by the tourist. To visit Skye is to make a progress into "the dark backward and abysm of time." You turn your back on the present and walk into antiquity. You see everything in the light of Ossian, as in the light of a mournful sunset. With a Norse murmur the blue Lochs come running in. The Canongate of Edinburgh is Scottish history in stone and lime; but in Skye you stumble on matters older still. Everything

about the traveller is remote and strange. You hear a foreign language; you are surrounded by Macleods, Macdonalds, and Nicolsons; you come on gray stones standing upright on the moor—marking the site of a battle, or the burial-place of a chief. You listen to traditions of ancient skirmishes; you sit on ruins of ancient date, in which Ossian might have sung. The Loch yonder was darkened by the banner of King Haco. Prince Charles wandered over this heath, or slept in that cave. The country is thinly peopled, and its solitude is felt as a burden. The precipices of the Storr lower grandly over the sea; the eagle has yet its eyrie on the ledges of the Cuchullins. The sound of the sea is continually in your ears; the silent armies of mists and vapours perpetually deploy; the wind is gusty on the moor; and ever and anon the jags of the hills are obscured by swirls of fiercely-blown rain. And more than all, the island is pervaded by a subtle spiritual atmosphere. It is as strange to the mind as it is to the eye. Old songs and traditions are the spiritual analogues of old castles and burying-places—and old songs and traditions you have in abundance. There is a smell of the sea in the material air; and there is a ghostly something in the air of the imagination. There are prophesying voices amongst

the hills of an evening. The raven that flits across your path is a weird thing—mayhap by the spell of some strong enchanter, a human soul is balefully imprisoned in the hearse-like carcass. You hear the stream, and the voice of the kelpie in it. You breathe again the air of old story-books ; but they are northern, not eastern ones. To what better place, then, can the tired man go ? There he will find refreshment and repose. There the wind blows out on him from another century. The Sahara itself is not a greater contrast from the London street than is the Skye wilderness.

The chain of islands on the western coast of Scotland, extending from Bute in the throat of the Clyde, beloved of invalids, onward to St Kilda, looking through a cloud of gannets toward the polar night, was originally an appanage of the crown of Norway. In the dawn of history there is a noise of Norsemen around the islands, as there is to-day a noise of sea-birds. There fought, as old sagas tell, Anund, the stanchest warrior that ever did battle on wooden leg. *Wood-foot* he was called by his followers. When he was fighting his hardest, his men used to shove toward him a block of wood, and resting his maimed limb on that, he laid about him right manfully. From the islands also sailed Helgi, half-pagan, half-Christian. Helgi

was much mixed in his faith; he was a good Christian in time of peace, but the aid of Thor he was always certain to invoke when he sailed on some dangerous expedition, or when he entered into battle. Old Norwegian castles, perched on the bold Skye headlands, yet moulder in hearing of the surge. The sea-rovers come no longer in their dark galleys, but hill and dale wear ancient names that sigh to the Norway pine. The inhabitant of Mull or Skye perusing the "Burnt Njal," is struck most of all by the names of localities—because they are almost identical with the names of localities in his own neighbourhood. The Skye headlands of Trotternish, Greshornish, and Vaternish, look northward to Norway headlands that wear the same or similar names. Professor Munch, of Christiania, states that the names of many of the islands, Arran, Gigha, Mull, Tyree, Skye, Raasay, Lewes, and others, are in their original form Norwegian and not Gaelic. The Hebrides have received a Norse baptism. Situated as these islands are between Norway and Scotland, the Norseman found them convenient stepping-stones, or resting-places, on his way to the richer southern lands. There he erected temporary strongholds, and founded settlements. Doubtless, in course of time, the son of the Norseman looked on the daughter of the Celt, and saw

that she was fair, and a mixed race was the result of alliances. To this day in the islands the Norse element is distinctly visible—not only in old castles, the names of places, but in the faces and entire mental build of the people. Claims of pure Scandinavian descent are put forward by many of the old families. Wandering up and down the islands you encounter faces that possess no Celtic characteristics; which carry the imagination to

"Noroway ower the faem;"

people with cool calm blue eyes, and hair yellow as the dawn; who are resolute and persistent, slow in pulse and speech; and who differ from the explosive Celtic element surrounding them as the iron headland differs from the fierce surge that washes it, or a block of marble from the heated palm pressed against it. The Hebrideans are a mixed race; in them the Norseman and the Celt are combined, and here and there is a dash of Spanish blood which makes brown the cheek and darkens the eye. This southern admixture may have come about through old trading relations with the Peninsula—perhaps the wrecked Armada may have had something to do with it. The Highlander of Sir Walter, like the Red Indian of Cooper, is to a large extent an ideal being. But as Uncas does really wear war-paint, wield a

tomahawk, scalp his enemies, and, when the time comes, can stoically die, so the Highlander possesses many of the qualities popularly ascribed to him. Scott exaggerated only; he did not invent. He looked with a poet's eye on the district north of the Grampians—a vision keener than any other for what *is*, but which burdens, and supplements, and glorifies—which, in point of fact, puts a nimbus around everything. The Highlander stands alone amongst the British people. For generations his land was shut against civilisation by mountain and forest and intricate pass. While the large drama of Scottish history was being played out in the Lowlands, he was busy in his mists with narrow clan-fights and revenges. While the southern Scot owed allegiance to the Jameses, he was subject to Lords of the Isles, and to Duncans and Donalds innumerable; while the one thought of Flodden, the other remembered the "sair field of the Harlaw." The Highlander was, and is still so far as circumstances permit, a proud, loving, punctilious being: full of loyalty, careful of social distinction; with a bared head for his chief, a jealous eye for his equal, an armed heel for his inferior. He loved the valley in which he was born, the hills on the horizon of his childhood; his sense of family relationship was strong,

and around him widening rings of cousinship extended to the very verge of the clan. The Islesman is a Highlander of the Highlanders; modern life took longer in reaching him, and his weeping climate, his misty wreaths and vapours, and the silence of his moory environments, naturally continued to act upon and to shape his character. He is song-loving, "of imagination all compact;" and out of the natural phenomena of his mountain region —his mist and rain-cloud, wan sea-setting of the moon, stars glancing through rifts of vapour, blowing wind and broken rainbows—he has drawn his poetry and his superstition. His mists give him the shroud high on the living heart, the sea-foam gives him an image of the whiteness of the breasts of his girls, and the broken rainbow of their blushes. To a great extent his climate has made him what he is. He is a child of the mist. His songs are melancholy for the most part; and you may discover in his music the monotony of the brown moor, the seethe of the wave on the rock, the sigh of the wind in the long grasses of the deserted churchyard. The musical instrument in which he chiefly delights renders most successfully the coronach and the battle-march. The Highlands are now open to all the influences of civilisation. The inhabitants wear breeches and speak English

even as we. Old gentlemen peruse their *Times* with spectacles on nose. Young lads construe "Cornelius Nepos," even as in other quarters of the British islands. Young ladies knit, and practise music, and wear crinoline. But the old descent and breeding are visible through all modern disguises: and your Highlander at Oxford or Cambridge—discoverable not only by his rocky countenance, but by some dash of wild blood, or eccentricity, or enthusiasm, or logical twist and turn of thought—is as much a child of the mist as his ancestor who, three centuries ago, was called a "wilde man" or a "red shanks;" who could, if need were, live on a little oatmeal, sleep in snow, and, with one hand on the stirrup, keep pace with the swiftest horse, let the rider spur never so fiercely. It is in the Isles, however, and particularly amongst the old Islesmen, that the Highland character is, at this day, to be found in its purity. There, in the dwelling of the proprietor, or still more in that of the large sheep farmer—who is of as good blood as the laird himself—you find the hospitality, the prejudice, the generosity, the pride of birth, the delight in ancient traditions, which smack of the antique time. Love of wandering, and pride in military life, have been characteristic of all the old families. The pen is alien to

their fingers, but they have wielded the sword industriously. They have had representatives in every Peninsular and Indian battle-field. India has been the chosen field of their activity. Of the miniatures kept in every family more than one-half are soldiers, and several have attained to no inconsiderable rank. The Island of Skye has itself given to the British and Indian armies at least a dozen generals. And in other services the Islesman has drawn his sword. Marshal Macdonald had Hebridean blood in his veins; and my friend Mr M'Ian remembers meeting him at Armadale Castle while hunting up his relations in the island, and tells me that he looked like a Jesuit in his long coat. And lads, to whom the profession of arms has been shut, have gone to plant indigo in Bengal or coffee in Ceylon, and have returned with gray hairs to the island to spend their money there, and to make the stony soil a little greener; and during their thirty years of absence Gaelic did not moulder on their tongues, nor did their fingers forget their cunning with the pipes. The palm did not obliterate the memory of the birch; nor the slow up-swelling of the tepid wave, and its long roar of frothy thunder on the flat red sands at Madras, the coasts of their childhood and the smell and smoke of burning kelp.

The important names in Skye are Macdonald and Macleod. Both are of great antiquity, and it is as difficult to discover the source of either in history as it is to discover the source of the Nile in the deserts of Central Africa. Distance in the one case appals the geographer, and in the other the antiquary. Macdonald is of pure Celtic origin, it is understood; Macleod was originally a Norseman. Macdonald was the Lord of the Isles, and more than once crossed swords with Scottish kings. Time has stripped him of royalty, and the present representative of the family is a Baron merely. He sits in his modern castle of Armadale amid pleasant larch plantations, with the figure of Somerlid—the half mythical founder of his race—in the large window of his hall. The two families intermarried often and quarrelled oftener. They put wedding rings on each other's fingers and dirks into each other's hearts. Of the two, Macleod had the darker origin; and around his name there lingers a darker poetry. Macdonald sits in his new castle in sunny Sleat with a southern outlook—Macleod retains his old eyrie at Dunvegan, with its drawbridge and dungeons. At night he can hear the sea beating on the base of his rock. His "maidens" are wet with the sea foam. His mountain "tables" are shrouded with

the mists of the Atlantic. He has a fairy flag in his possession. The rocks and mountains around him wear his name even as of old did his clansmen. "Macleod's country," the people yet call the northern portion of the island. In Skye song and tradition Macdonald is like the green strath with milkmaids milking kine in the fold at sunset, with fishers singing songs as they mend brown nets on the shore. Macleod, on the other hand, is of darker and drearier import—like a wild rocky spire of Quirang or Storr, dimmed with the flying vapour and familiar with the voice of the blast and the wing of the raven. "Macleod's country" looks toward Norway with the pale headlands of Greshornish, Trotternish, and Durinish. The portion of the island which Macdonald owns is comparatively soft and green, and lies to the south.

The Western Islands lie mainly out of the region of Scottish history, and yet by Scottish history they are curiously touched at intervals, Skye more particularly so. In 1263 when King Haco set out on his great expedition against Scotland with one hundred ships and twenty thousand men—an Armada, the period taken into consideration, quite as formidable as the more famous and ill-fated Spanish one some centuries later—the multitude of his sails darkened the Skye lochs. Snizort speaks of him

yet. He passed through the Kyles, breathed for a little while at Kerrera, and then swept down on the Ayrshire coast, where King Alexander awaited him, and where the battle of Largs was fought.*

* This battle occupies the same place in early Scottish annals that Trafalgar or Waterloo occupies in later British ones. It stands in the dawn of Scottish history—resonant, melodious. Unhappily, however, the truth must be told—the battle was a drawn one, neither side being able to claim the victory. Professor Munch, in his notes to "The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys," gives the following account of the combat, and of the negotiations that preceded it:—

"When King Hacon appeared off Ayr, and anchored at Arran, King Alexander, who appears to have been present himself at Ayr, or in the neighbourhood of the town, with the greater part of his forces, now opened negotiations, sending several messages by Franciscan or Dominican Friars for the purpose of treating for peace. Nor did King Hacon show himself unwilling to negotiate, and proved this sufficiently by permitting Eogan of Argyll to depart in peace, loading him, moreover, with presents, on the condition that he should do his best to bring about a reconciliation,—Eogan pledging himself, if he did not succeed, to return to King Hacon. Perhaps it was due to the exertions of Eogan, that a truce was concluded, in order to commence negotiations in a more formal manner. King Hacon now despatched an embassy, consisting of two bishops, Gilbert of Hamar, and Henry of Orkney, with three barons, to Alexander, whom they found at Ayr. They were well received, but could not get any definite answer,—Alexander alleging that, before proposing the conditions, he must consult with his councillors; this done, he should not fail to let King Hacon know the result. The Norwegian messengers, therefore, returned to their king, who meanwhile had removed to Bute. The next day, however, messengers arrived from King Alexander, bringing a list of those isles which he would not resign,—viz., Arran, Bute, and the Cumreys, (that is, generally speaking, the isles inside Kentire,) which implies that he now offered to renounce his claim to all the others. It is certainly not to be wondered at that he did not like to see those isles, which

After the battle Haco, grievously tormented by tempests, sailed for Norway, where he died. This was the last invasion of the Northmen, and a few

commanded the entrance to the Clyde, in the hands of another power. King Hacon, however, had prepared another list, which contained the names of all those isles which he claimed for the crown of Norway; and although the exact contents are not known, there can be no doubt that at least Arran and Bute were among the number. The Saga says that, on the whole, there was, after all, no great difference, but that, nevertheless, no final reconciliation could be obtained,—the Scotchmen trying only to protract the negotiations because the summer was past, and the bad weather was begun. The Scotch messengers at last returned, and King Hacon removed with the fleet to the Cumreys, near Largs, in the direction of Cuningham, no doubt with a view of being either nearer at hand if the negotiations failed, and a landing was to be effected, or only of intimidating his opponents and hastening the conclusion of the peace, as the roadstead in itself seems to have been far less safe than that of Lamlash or Bute. King Alexander sent, indeed, several messages, and it was agreed to hold a new congress a little farther up in the country, which shows that King Alexander now had removed from Ayr to a spot nearer Largs, perhaps to Camphill, (on the road from Largs to Kilbirnie,) where a local tradition states the king encamped. The Norwegian messengers were, as before, some bishops and barons; the Scotch commissaries were some knights and monks. The deliberations were long, but still without any result. At last, when the day was declining, a crowd of Scotchmen began to gather, and, as it continued to increase, the Norwegians, not thinking themselves safe, returned without having obtained anything. The Norwegian warriors now demanded earnestly that the truce should be renounced, because their provisions had begun to be scarce, and they wanted to plunder. King Hacon accordingly sent one of his esquires, named Kolbein, to King Alexander with the letter issued by this monarch, ordering him to claim back that given by himself, and thus declare the truce to be ended, previously, however, proposing that both kings should meet at the head of their

years after the islands were formally ceded to Scotland. Although ceded, however, they could hardly be said to be ruled by the Scottish kings.

respective armies, and try a personal conference before coming to extremities; only, if that failed, they might go to battle as the last expedient. King Alexander, however, did not declare his intention plainly, and Kolbein, tired of waiting, delivered up the letter, got that of King Hacon back, and thus rescinded the truce. He was escorted to the ships by two monks. Kolbein, when reporting to King Hacon his proceedings, told him that Eogan of Argyll had earnestly tried to persuade King Alexander from fighting with the Norwegians. It does not seem, however, that Eogan went back to King Hacon according to his promise. This monarch now was greatly exasperated, and desired the Scottish monks, when returning, to tell their king that he would very soon recommence the hostilities, and try the issue of a battle.

"Accordingly, King Hacon detached King Dugald, Alan M'Rory his brother, Angus of Isla, Murchard of Kentire, and two Norwegian commanders, with sixty ships, to sail into Loch Long, and ravage the circumjacent ports, while he prepared to land himself with the main force at Largs, and fight the Scottish army. The detachment does not appear to have met with any serious resistance, all the Scotch forces being probably collected near Largs. The banks of Loch Lomond and the whole of Lennox were ravaged. Angus even ventured across the country to the other side, probably near Stirling, killing men and taking a great number of cattle. This done, the troops who had been on shore returned to the ships. Here, however, a terrible storm, which blew for two days, (Oct. 1 and 2,) wrecked ten vessels; and one of the Norwegian captains was taken sick, and died suddenly.

"Also the main fleet, off Largs, suffered greatly by the same tempest. It began in the night between Sunday (Sept. 30) and Monday (Oct. 1,) accompanied by violent showers. A large transport vessel drifted down on the bow of the royal ship, swept off the gallion, and got foul of the cable; it was at last cast loose and drifted toward the island; but on the royal ship it had been necessary to remove the usual awnings and covers, and in the morning (Oct. 1)

After the termination of the Norway government, the Hebrides were swayed by the Macdonalds, who called themselves Lords of the Isles. These chief-

when the flood commenced, the wind likewise turned, and the vessel, along with another vessel of transport and a ship of war, was driven on the main beach, where it stuck fast, the royal ship drifting down while with five anchors, and only stopped when the eighth had been let go. The king had found it safest to land in a boat on the Cumrey, with the clergy, who celebrated mass, the greater part believing that the tempest had been raised by witchcraft. Soon the other ships began to drift; several had to cut away the masts; five drifted towards the shore, and three went aground. The men on board these ships were now dangerously situated, because the Scotch, who from their elevated position could see very well what passed in the fleet, sent down detachments against them, while the storm prevented their comrades in the fleet from coming to their aid. They manned, however, the large vessel which had first drifted on shore, and defended themselves as well as they could against the superior force of the enemy, who began shooting at them. Happily the storm abated a little, and the king was not only able to return on board his ships, but even sent them some aid in boats; the Scotch were put to flight, and the Norwegians were able to pass the night on shore. Yet, in the dark, some Scots found their way to the vessel and took what they could. In the morning (Tuesday, Oct. 2,) the king himself, with some barons and some troops, went to shore in boats to secure the valuable cargo of the transport, or what was left of it, in which they succeeded. Now, however, the main army of the Scots was seen approaching, and the king, who at first meant to remain on shore and head his troops himself, was prevailed upon by his men, who feared lest he should expose himself too much, to return on board his ship. The number of the Norwegians left on shore did not exceed 1000 men, 240 of whom, commanded by the Baron Agmund Krokidans, occupied a hillock, the rest were stationed on the beach. The Scotch, it is related in the Saga, had about 600 horsemen in armour, several of whom had Spanish steeds, all covered with mail; they had a great deal of infantry, well armed, especially with bows and Lochaber axes.

tains waxed powerful, and they more than once led the long-haired Islesmen into Scotland, where they murdered, burned, and ravaged without

The Norwegians believed that King Alexander himself was in the army: perhaps this is true. We learn, however, from Fordun that the real commander was Alexander of Dundonald, the Stewart of Scotland. The Scotch first attacked the knoll with the 240 men, who retired slowly, always facing the enemy and fighting; but in retracing their steps down hill, as they could not avoid accelerating their movement as the impulse increased, those on the beach believed that they were routed, and a sudden panic betook them for a moment, which cost many lives; as the boats were too much crowded they sank with their load; others, who did not reach the boats, fled in a southerly direction, and were pursued by the Scotch, who killed many of them; others sought refuge in the aforesaid stranded vessel: at last they rallied behind one of the stranded ships of war, and an obstinate battle began; the Norwegians, now that the panic was over, fighting desperately. Then it was that the young and valiant Piers of Curry, of whom even Fordun and Wyntown speak, was killed by the Norwegian baron Andrew Nicholasson, after having twice ridden through the Norwegian ranks. The storm for a while prevented King Hacon from aiding his men, and the Scotch being tenfold stronger, began to get the upper hand; but at last two barons succeeded in landing with fresh troops, when the Scotch were gradually driven back upon the knoll, and then put to flight towards the hills. This done, the Norwegians returned on board the ships; on the following morning (Oct. 3) they returned on shore to carry away the bodies of the slain, which, it appears, they effected quite unmolested by the enemy; all the bodies were carried to a church, no doubt in Bute, and there buried. The next day, (Thursday, Oct. 4,) the king removed his ship farther out under the island, and the same day the detachment arrived which had been sent to Loch Long. The following day, (Friday, Oct. 5,) the weather being fair, the king sent men on shore to burn the stranded ships, which likewise appears to have been effected without any hindrance from the enemy. On the same day he removed with the whole fleet to Lamlash harbour."

mercy. In 1411 Donald, one of those island kings, descended on the mainland, and was sorely defeated by the Earl of Mar at Harlaw, near Aberdeen. By another potentate of the same stock the counties of Ross and Moray were ravaged in 1456. In the Western Islands the Macdonalds exercised authentic sovereignty; they owned allegiance to the Scottish king when he penetrated into their remote dominions, and disowned it whenever he turned his back. The Macdonald dynasty, or *quasi* dynasty, existed till 1536, when the last Lord of the Isles died without an heir, and when there was no shoulder on which the mantle of his authority could fall.

How the Macdonalds came into their island throne it would be difficult, by the flickering rush-light of history, to discover. But wandering up and down the islands, myself and the narrator

With what a curious particularity the Saga relates the events of this smokeless ancient combat—so different from modern ones, where "the ranks are rolled in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound"—and how Piers of Curry, "who had ridden twice through the Norwegian ranks," towers amongst the combatants! As the describer of battles, since the invention of gunpowder, Homer would be no better than Sir Archibald Alison. We have more explicit information as to this skirmish on the Ayrshire coast in the thirteenth century than we have concerning the battle of Solferino; and yet King Hacon has been in his grave these five centuries, and Napoleon III. and Kaiser Joseph yet live. And "Our Own Correspondent" had not come into the world at that date either.

swathed in a film of blue peat-smoke, a ray of dusty light streaming in through the green bull's-eye in the window, I have heard the following account given:—The branches of the Macdonald family, Macdonald of Sleat, Clanranald, who wears the white heather in his bonnet, the analogue of the white rose, and which has been dipped in blood quite as often, Keppoch, one of whose race fell at Culloden, and the rest, were descended from a certain Godfrey, King of Argyll. This Godfrey had four sons, and one of them was named Somerlid, youngest, bravest, handsomest of all. But unhappily Somerlid was without ambition. While his brothers were burning and ravaging and slaying, grasping lands and running away with rich heiresses, after the fashion of promising young gentlemen of that era, the indolent and handsome giant employed himself in hunting and fishing. His looking-glass was the stream; his drinking-cup the heel of his shoe; he would rather spear a salmon than spear his foe; he burned no churches, the only throats he cut were the throats of deer; he cared more to caress the skins of seals and otters than the shining hair of women. Old Godfrey liked the lad's looks, but had a contempt for his peaceful ways, and, shaking his head, thought him little better than a ne'er-do-weel or a

silly one. But for all that, there was a deal of unsuspected matter in Somerlid. At present he was peaceful as a torch or a beacon—unlit. The hour was coming when he would be changed; when he would blaze like a brandished torch, or a beacon on a hill-top against which the wind is blowing.

It so happened that the men of the Western Isles had lost their chief. There was no one to lead them to battle, and it was absolutely necessary that a leader should be procured. Much meditating to whom they should offer their homage they bethought themselves of the young hunter chasing deer on the Argyllshire hills. A council was held; and it was resolved that a deputation should be sent to Somerlid to state their case, and to offer that if he should accept the office of chieftain, he and his children should be their chieftains for ever. In some half-dozen galleys the deputation set sail, and finally arrived at the court of old Godfrey. When they told what they wanted, that potentate sent them to seek Somerlid; and him they found fishing. Somerlid listened to their words with an unmoved countenance; and when they were done, he went aside a little to think over the matter. That done he came forward: "Islesmen," he said, "there's a newly-run salmon in the black pool yonder. If I catch him, I shall go with you as

your chief; if I catch him not, I shall remain where I am." To this the men of the Isles were agreeable, and they sat down on the banks of the river to watch the result. Somerlid threw his line over the black pool, and in a short time the silvery mail of the salmon was gleaming on the yellow sands of the river bank. When they saw this the Islesmen shouted; and so after bidding farewell to his father, the elect of the thousands stepped into the largest galley, and with the others in his wake, sailed toward Skye a chief!

When was there a warrior like Somerlid? He spoiled and ravaged like an eagle. He delighted in battle. He rolled his garments in blood. He conquered island after island; he went out with empty galleys, and he returned with them filled with prey, his oarsmen singing his praises. He built up his island throne. He was the first Lord of the Isles; and from his loins sprung all the Lords of the Isles that ever were. He was a Macdonald, and from him the Macdonalds of Sleat are descended. He wore a tartan of his own, which only the Prince of Wales and the young Lord Macdonald, sitting to-day in Eton school, are entitled to wear. And if at any time I ventured to impugn the truth of this legend, I was told that if I went to Armadale Castle I should see

the image of Somerlid in the great window of the hall. That was surely confirmation of the truth of the story. He must surely be a sceptical Sassenach who would disbelieve after witnessing *that.*

Although the Lords of the Isles exercised virtual sovereignty in the Hebrides, the Jameses made many attempts to break their power and bring them into subjection. James I. penetrated into the Highlands, and assembled a Parliament at Inverness in 1427. He enticed many of the chiefs to his court, and seized, imprisoned, and executed several of the more powerful. Those who escaped with their lives were forced to deliver up hostages. In fact, the Scottish kings looked upon the Highlanders very much as they looked upon the borderers. In moments of fitful energy they broke on the Highlands just as they broke upon Ettrick and Liddesdale, and hanged and executed right and left. One of the Acts of Parliament of James IV. declared that the Highlands and Islands had become savage for want of a proper administration of justice; and James V. made a voyage to the Islands in 1536, when many of the chiefs were captured and carried away. It was about this time that the last Lord of the Isles died. The Jameses were now kings of the Highlands and Islands, but they were only kings in a nominal

sense. Every chief regarded himself as a sort of independent prince. The Highland chieftains appeared at Holyrood, it is true; but they drew dirks and shed blood in the presence; they were wanting in reverence for the sceptre; they brought their own feuds with them to the Scottish court, and when James VI. attempted to dissolve these feuds in the wine cup, he met with but indifferent success. So slight was lawful authority in 1589 that the island of the Lewes was granted by the crown to a body of Fife gentlemen, if they would but take and hold possession—just as the lands of the rebellious Maories might be granted to the colonists at the present day.

Many a gallant ship of the Spanish Armada was wrecked on the shores of the Western Islands, on the retreat to Spain; and a gun taken from one of these, it is said, lies at Dunstaffnage Castle. In the Islands you yet come across Spanish names, and traces of Spanish blood; and the war ships of Spain that came to grief on the bleak headlands of Skye and Lewes, may have something to do with that. Where the vase is broken there still lingers the scent of the roses. The connexion between Spain and the Western Islands is little more than a mere accident of tempest. Then came the death of Elizabeth and the accession of James to

the English throne; and the time was fast approaching when the Highlander would become a more important personage than ever; when the claymore would make its mark in British History.

At first sight it is a matter of wonder that the clans should ever have become Jacobite. They were in nowise indebted to the house of Stuart. With the Scottish kings the Highlands and Islands were almost continually at war. When a James came amongst the northern chieftains he carried an ample death-warrant in his face. The presents he brought were the prison key, the hangman's rope, the axe of the executioner. When the power departed from the Lords of the Isles, the clans regarded the king who sat in Holyrood as their nominal superior; but they were not amenable to any central law; each had its own chief—was self-contained, self-governed, and busy with its own private revenges and forays. When the Lowland burgher was busy with commerce, and the Lowland farmer was busy with his crops, the clansman walked his misty mountains very much as his fathers did centuries before; and his hand was as familiar with the hilt of his broadsword as the hand of the Perth burgher with the ellwand, or that of the farmer of the Lothians with the plough-shaft. The Lowlander had become industrious and commercial; the Highlander still

loved the skirmish and the raid. The Lowlands had become rich in towns, in money, in goods; the Highlands were rich only in swordsmen. When Charles's troubles with his Parliament began, the valour of the Highlands was wasting itself; and Montrose was the first man who saw how that valour could be utilised. Himself a feudal chief, and full of feudal feeling, when he raised the banner of the king he appealed to the ancient animosities of the clans. His arch-foe was Argyll; he knew that Campbell was a widely-hated name; and that hate he made his recruiting sergeant. He bribed the chiefs, but his bribe was revenge. The mountaineers flocked to his standard; but they came to serve themselves rather than to serve Charles. The defeat of Argyll might be a good thing for the king; but with that they had little concern—it was the sweetest of private revenges, and righted a century of wrongs. The Macdonalds of Sleat fought under the great Marquis at Inverlochy; but the Skye shepherd considers only that on that occasion his forefathers had a grand slaying of their hereditary enemies—he has no idea that the interest of the king was at all involved in the matter. While the battle was proceeding, blind Allan sat on the castle walls with a little boy beside him; the boy related how the battle went, and the bard

wove the incidents into extemporaneous song—full of scorn and taunts when the retreat of Argyll in his galley is described—full of exultation when the bonnets of fifteen hundred dead Campbells are seen floating in the Lochy—and blind Allan's song you can hear repeated in Skye at this day. When the splendid career of Montrose came to an end at Philiphaugh, the clansmen who won his battles for him were no more adherents of the king than they had been centuries before: but then they had gratified hatred; they had had ample opportunities for plunder; the chiefs had gained a new importance; they had been assured of the royal gratitude and remembrance; and if they received but scant supplies of royal gold, they were promised argosies. By fighting under Montrose they were in a sense committed to the cause of the king; and when at a later date Claverhouse again raised the royal standard, that argument was successfully used. They had already served the house of Stuart; they had gained victories in its behalf: the king would not always be in adversity; the time would come when he would be able to reward his friends; having put their hands to the plough it would be folly to turn back. And so a second time the clans rose, and at Killiecrankie an avalanche of kilted men broke the royal lines, and in a quarter of

an hour a disciplined army was in ruins, and the bed of the raging Garry choked with corpses. By this time the Stuart cause had gained a footing in the Highlands, mainly from the fact that the clans had twice fought in its behalf. Then a dark whisper of the massacre of Glencoe passed through the glens—and the clansmen believed that the princes *they* had served would not have violated every claim of hospitality, and shot them down so on their own hearthstones. All this confirmed the growing feeling of attachment to the king across the water. When the Earl of Mar rose in 1715, Macdonald of Sleat joined him with his men; and being sent out to drive away a party of the enemy who had appeared on a neighbouring height, opened the battle of Sheriffmuir. In 1745, when Prince Charles landed in Knoydart, he sent letters to Macdonald and Macleod in Skye soliciting their aid. Between them they could have brought 2000 claymores into the field; and had the prince brought a foreign force with them, they might have complied with his request. As it was, they hesitated, and finally resolved to range themselves on the side of the Government. Not a man from Sleat fought under the prince. The other great branches of the Macdonald family, Clanranald, Keppoch, and Glengarry, joined him, however;

and Keppoch at Culloden, when he found that his men were broken, and would not rally at the call of their chief, charged the English lines alone, and was brought down by a musket bullet.

The Skye gentlemen did not rise at the call of the prince, but when his cause was utterly lost, a Skye lady came to his aid, and rendered him essential service. Neither at the time, nor afterwards, did Flora Macdonald consider herself a heroine, (although Grace Darling herself did not bear a braver heart ;) and she is noticeable to this day in history, walking demurely with the white rose in her bosom. When the prince met Miss Macdonald in Benbecula, he was in circumstances sufficiently desperate. The lady had expressed an anxious desire to see Charles ; and at their meeting, which took place in a hut belonging to her brother, it struck Captain O'Neil, an officer attached to the prince, and at the moment the sole companion of his wanderings, that she might carry Charles with her to Skye in the disguise of her maid-servant. Miss Macdonald consented. She procured a six-oared boat, and when she and her companions entered the hovel in which the prince lay, they found him engaged in roasting for dinner with a wooden spit the heart, liver, and kidneys of a sheep. They were full of compassion, of course ;

but the prince, who possessed the wit as well as the courage of his family, turned his misfortunes into jests. The party sat down to dinner not uncareless of state. Flora sat on the right hand, and Lady Clanranald, one of Flora's companions, on the left hand of the prince. They talked of St James's as they sat at their rude repast; and stretching out hands of hope, warmed themselves at the fire of the future.

After dinner Charles equipped himself in the attire of a maid-servant. His dress consisted of a flowered linen gown, a light-coloured quilted petticoat, a white apron, and a mantle of dun camlet, made after the Irish fashion, with a hood. They supped on the sea-shore; and while doing so a messenger arrived with the intelligence that a body of military was in the neighbourhood in quest of the fugitive, and on hearing this news Lady Clanranald immediately went home. They sailed in the evening with a fair wind, but they had not rowed above a league when a storm arose, and Charles had to support the spirits of his companions by singing songs and making merry speeches. They came in sight of the pale Skye headlands in the morning, and as they coasted along the shore they were fired on by a party of Macleod militia. While the bullets were falling around,

the prince and Flora lay down in the bottom of the boat. The militia were probably indifferent marksmen ; at all events no one was hurt.

After coasting along for a space, they landed at Mugstot, the seat of Sir Alexander Macdonald. Lady Macdonald was a daughter of the Earl of Eglinton's, and an avowed Jacobite ; and as it was known that Sir Alexander was at Fort Augustus with the Duke of Cumberland, they had no scruple in seeking protection. Charles was left in the boat, and Flora went forward to apprise Lady Macdonald of their arrival. Unhappily, however, there was a Captain Macleod, an officer of militia, in the house, and Flora had to parry as best she could his interrogations concerning Charles, whose head was worth £30,000. Lady Macdonald was in great alarm lest the presence of the prince should be discovered. Kingsburgh, Sir Alexander's factor, was on the spot, and the ladies took him into their confidence. After consultation, it was agreed that Skye was unsafe, and that Charles should proceed at once to Raasay, taking up his residence at Kingsburgh by the way.

During all this while Charles remained on the shore, feeling probably very much as a Charles of another century did, when, shrouded up in oak foliage, he heard the Roundhead riding beneath.

Kingsburgh was anxious to acquaint him with the determination of his friends, but then there was the pestilent captain on the premises, who might prick his ear at a whisper; and whose suspicion, if once aroused, might blaze out into ruinous action Kingsburgh had concerted his plan, but in carrying it into execution it behoved him to tread so lightly that the blind mole should not hear a footfall. He sent a servant down to the shore to inform the strange maid-servant with the mannish stride that he meant to visit her, but that in the meantime she should screen herself from observation behind a neighbouring hill. Taking with him wine and provisions, Kingsburgh went out in search of the prince. He searched for a considerable time without finding him, and was about to return to the house, when at some little distance he observed a scurry amongst a flock of sheep. Knowing that sheep did not scurry about after that fashion for their own amusement, he approached the spot, when all at once the prince started out upon him like another Meg Merrilees, a large knotted stick in his fist. "I am Macdonald of Kingsburgh," said the visitor, "come to serve your highness." "It is well," said Charles, saluting him. Kingsburgh then opened out his plan, with which the prince expressed himself satisfied. After Charles

had partaken of some refreshment, they both started towards Kingsburgh House.

The ladies at Mugstot were all this while in sad perplexity, and to that perplexity, on account of the presence of the captain of militia, they could not give utterance. As Kingsburgh had not returned, they could only hope that he had succeeded in finding the prince, and in removing him from that dangerous neighbourhood. Meanwhile dinner was announced, and the captain politely handed in the ladies. He drank his wine, paid Miss Macdonald his most graceful compliments, for a captain—if even of militia only—can never, in justice to his cloth, be indifferent to the fair. It belongs to his profession to be gallant, as it belongs to the profession of a clergyman to say grace before meat. We may be sure, however, that his roses of compliment stung like nettles. He talked of the prince, as a matter of course—the prince being the main topic of conversation in the Islands at the period—perhaps expressed a strong desire to catch him. All this the ladies had to endure, hiding, as the way of the sex is, fluttering hearts under countenances most hypocritically composed. After dinner, Flora rose at once, but a look from Lady Macdonald induced her to remain for yet a little. Still the gallant captain's talk flowed on, and *he*

must be deceived at any cost. At last Miss Flora was moved with the most filial feelings. She was anxious to be with her mother, to stay and comfort her in these troublous times. She must really be going. Lady Macdonald pressed her to stay, got the gallant captain to bring his influence to bear, but with no effect. The wilful young lady would not listen to entreaty. Her father was absent, and at such a time the claim of a lone mother on a daughter's attention was paramount. Her apology was accepted at last, but only on the condition that she should return soon to Mugstot and make a longer stay. The ladies embraced each other, and then Miss Macdonald mounted, and attended by several servants rode after Prince Charles, who was now some distance on the road to Kingsburgh. Lady Macdonald returned to the captain, than whom seldom has one—whether of the line or the militia—been more cleverly hoodwinked.

Miss Macdonald's party, when she rode after the prince and Kingsburgh, consisted of Neil M'Eachan, who acted as guide, and Mrs Macdonald, who was attended by a male and female servant. They overtook the prince, and Mrs Macdonald, who had never seen him before, was anxious to obtain a peep of his countenance. This Charles carefully avoided. Mrs Macdonald's

maid, noticing the uncouth appearance of the tall female figure, whispered to Miss Flora that she "had never seen such an impudent-looking woman as the one with whom Kingsburgh was talking," and expressed her belief that the stranger was either an Irishwoman, or a man in woman's clothes. Miss Flora whispered in reply, "that she was right in her conjecture—that the amazon was really an Irishwoman, that she knew her, having seen her before." The abigail then exclaimed, "Bless me, what long strides the jade takes, and how awkwardly she manages her clothes!" Miss Macdonald, wishing to put an end to this conversation, urged the party to a trot. The pedestrians then struck across the hills, and reached Kingsburgh House about eleven o'clock,—the equestrians arriving soon after.

When they arrived there was some difficulty about supper, Mrs Macdonald of Kingsburgh having retired to rest. When her husband told her that the prince was in the house, she got up immediately, and under her direction the board was spread. The viands were eggs, butter, and cheese. Charles supped heartily, and after drinking a few glasses of wine, and smoking a pipe of tobacco, went to bed. Next morning there was a discussion as to the clothes he should wear;

Kingsburgh, fearing that his disguise should become known, urged Charles to wear a Highland dress, to which he gladly agreed. But as there were sharp eyes of servants about, it was arranged that, to prevent suspicion, he should leave the house in the same clothes in which he had come, and that he should change his dress on the road. When he had dressed himself in his feminine garments and come into the sitting-room, Charles noticed that the ladies were whispering together eagerly, casting looks on him the while. He desired to know the subject of conversation, and was informed by Mrs Macdonald that they wished a lock of his hair. The prince consented at once, and laying down his head in Miss Flora's lap, a lock of yellow hair was shorn off—to be treasured as the dearest of family relics, and guarded as jealously as good fame. Some silken threads of that same lock of hair I have myself seen. Mr M'Ian has some of it in a ring, which will probably be buried with him. After the hair was cut off, Kingsburgh presented the prince with a new pair of shoes, and the old ones—through which the toes protruded—were put aside, and considered as only less sacred than the shred of hair. They were afterwards bought by a Jacobite gentleman for twenty guineas—

the highest recorded price ever paid for that article.

Kingsburgh, Flora, and the prince then started for Portree, Kingsburgh carrying the Highland dress under his arm. After walking a short distance Charles entered a wood and changed his attire. He now wore a tartan short coat and waistcoat, with philabeg and hose, a plaid, and a wig and bonnet. Here Kingsburgh parted from the prince, and returned home. Conducted by a guide, Charles then started across the hills, while Miss Macdonald galloped along the common road to Portree to see how the land lay, and to become acquainted with the rumours stirring in the country.

There was considerable difficulty in getting the prince out of Skye ; a Portree crew could not be trusted, as on their return they might blab the whereabouts of the fugitive. In this dilemma a friend of the prince's bethought himself that there was a small boat on one of the neighbouring Lochs, and the boat was dragged by two brothers, aided by some women, across a mile of boggy ground to the sea-shore. It was utterly unseaworthy—leaky as the old brogues which Kingsburgh valued so much—but the two brothers nothing fearing got it launched, and rowed across to Raasay.

When the news came that the prince was at hand, Young Raasay, who had not been out in the rebellion, and his cousin, Malcolm Macleod, who had been, procured a strong boat, and with two oarsmen, whom they had sworn to secrecy, pulled across to Skye. They landed about half a mile from Portree, and Malcolm Macleod, accompanied by one of the men, went towards the inn, where he found the prince and Miss Macdonald. It had been raining heavily, and before he arrived, Charles was soaked to the skin. The first thing the prince called for was a dram ; he then put on a dry shirt, and after that he made a hearty meal on roasted fish, bread, cheese, and butter. The people in the inn had no suspicion of his rank, and with them he talked and joked. Malcolm Macleod had by this time gone back to the boat, where he waited the prince's coming. The guide implored Charles to go off at once, pointed out that the inn was a gathering place for all sorts of people, and that some one might penetrate his disguise—to all this the prince gave ready assent; but it rained still, and he spoke of risking everything and waiting where he was all night. The guide became yet more urgent, and the prince at last expressed his readiness to leave, only before going he wished to smoke a pipe of tobacco. He smoked his pipe,

bade farewell to Miss Macdonald, repaid her a small sum which he had borrowed, gave her his miniature, and expressed the hope that he should yet welcome her at St James's. Early in the dawn of the July morning, with four shirts, a bottle of brandy tied to one side of his belt, a bottle of whisky tied to the other, and a cold fowl done up in a pocket-handkerchief, he, under the direction of a guide, went down to the rocky shore, where the boat had so long been waiting. In a few hours they reached Raasay.

In Raasay the prince did not remain long. He returned to Skye, abode for a space in Strath, dwelling in strange places, and wearing many disguises—finally, through the aid of the chief of the Mackinnons, he reached the mainland. By this time it had become known to the Government that the prince had been wandering about the island, and Malcolm Macleod, Kingsburgh, and Miss Macdonald were apprehended. Miss Macdonald was at first confined in Dunstaffnage Castle, and was afterwards conveyed to London. Her imprisonment does not seem to have been severe, and she was liberated, it is said, at the special request of Frederick Prince of Wales. She and Malcolm Macleod returned to Scotland together. In 1750 Flora married Allan Macdonald, young Kings-

burgh, and on the death of his father in 1772 the young people went to live on the farm. Here they received Dr Johnson and Boswell. Shortly after, the family went to America, and in 1775 Kingsburgh joined the Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment. He afterwards served in Canada, and finally returned to Skye on half-pay. Flora had seven children, five sons and two daughters, the sons after the old Skye fashion becoming soldiers, and the daughters the wives of soldiers. She died in 1790, and was buried in the churchyard of Kilmuir. To the discredit of the Skye gentlemen—in many of whom her blood flows—the grave is in a state of utter disrepair. When I saw it two or three months ago it was covered with a rank growth of nettles. These are untouched. The tourist will deface tombstones, and carry away chips from a broken bust, but a nettle the boldest or the most enthusiastic will hardly pluck and convey from even the most celebrated grave. A line must be drawn somewhere, and Vandalism draws the line at nettles—it will not sting its own fingers for the world.

O Death! O Time! O men and women of whom we have read, what eager but unavailing hands we stretch towards you! How we would hear your voices, see your faces, but note the waft-

ure of your garments! With a strange feeling one paces round the ruins of the House of Corrichatachin, thinking of the debauch held therein a hundred years ago by a dead Boswell and young Highland bloods, dead too. But the ruin of the old house of Kingsburgh moves one more than the ruin of the old house of Corrichatachin. On the shore of Loch Snizort—waters shadowed once by the sails of Haco's galleys—we stumble on the latter ancient site. The outline of the walls is distinguished by a mere protuberance on the grassy turf; and in the space where fires burned, and little feet pattered, and men and women ate and drank, and the hospitable board smoked, great trees are growing. To this place did Flora Macdonald come and the prince—his head worth thirty thousand pounds—dressed in woman's clothes; there they rested for the night, and departed next morning. And the sheets in which the wanderer slept were carefully put aside, and years after they became the shroud for the lady of the house. And the old shoes the prince wore were kept by Kingsburgh till his dying day, and after that a "zealous Jacobite gentleman" paid twenty guineas for the treasure. That love for the young Ascanius!—the carnage of Culloden, and noble blood reddening many scaffolds, could not wash it out. Fancy

his meditations on all that devotion when an old besotted man in Rome—the glitter of the crown of his ancestors faded utterly away out of his bleared and tipsy eyes! And when Flora was mistress of it, to the same place came Boswell, and Johnson with a cold in his head. There the doctor saluted Flora, and snivelled his compliments, and slept in the bed the prince occupied. There Boswell was in a cordial humour, and, as his fashion was, "promoted, a cheerful glass." And all these people are ghosts and less. And, as I write, the wind is rising on Loch Snizort, and through the autumn rain the yellow leaves are falling on the places where the prince and the doctor and the toady sat.

One likes to know that Pope saw Dryden sitting in the easy-chair near the fire at Will's Coffee-house, and that Scott met Burns at Adam Ferguson's. It is pleasant also to know that Doctor Johnson and Flora Macdonald met. It was like the meeting of two widely-separated eras and orders of things. Fleet Street, and the Cuchullins with Ossianic mists on their crests, came face to face. It is pleasant also to know that the sage liked the lady, and the lady liked the sage. After the departure of the prince the arrival of Dr Johnson was the next great event in Hebridean history The doctor came, and looked about him,

and went back to London and wrote his book. Thereafter there was plenty of war; and the Islesmen became soldiers, fighting in India, America, and the Peninsula. The tartans waved through the smoke of every British battle, and there were no such desperate bayonet charges as those which rushed to the yell of the bagpipe. At the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, half the farms in Skye were rented by half-pay officers. The Army List was to the island what the Post-office Directory is to London. Then Scott came into the Highlands with the whole world of tourists at his back. Then up through Skye came Dr John M'Culloch — caustic, censorious, epigrammatic — and dire was the rage occasioned by the publication of his letters—the rage of men especially who had shown him hospitality and rendered him services, and who got their style of talk mimicked, and their household procedures laughed at for their pains. Then came evictions, emigrations, and the potato failure. Everything is getting prosaic as we approach the present time. Then my friend Mr Hutcheson established his magnificent fleet of Highland steamers. While I write the iron horse is at Dingwall, and he will soon be at Kyleakin—through which strait King Haco sailed seven centuries ago. In a couple of years or thereby Por-

tree will be distant twenty-four hours from London—that time the tourist will take in coming, that time black-faced mutton will take in going.

Wandering up and down the Western Islands, one is brought into contact with Ossian, and is launched into a sea of perplexities as to the genuineness of Macpherson's translation. That fine poems should have been composed in the Highlands so many centuries ago, and that these should have existed through that immense period of time in the memories and on the tongues of the common people, is sufficiently startling. The Border Ballads are children in their bloom compared with the hoary Ossianic legends and songs. On the other hand, the theory that Macpherson, whose literary efforts when he did not pretend to translate are extremely poor and meagre, should have, by sheer force of imagination, created poems confessedly full of fine things, with strong local colouring, not without a weird sense of remoteness, with heroes shadowy as if seen through Celtic mists: poems, too, which have been received by his countrymen as genuine, which Dr Johnson scornfully abused, and which Dr Blair enthusiastically praised, which have been translated into every language in Europe; which Goethe and Napoleon admired; from which Carlyle has drawn his "red son of the

furnace," and many a memorable sentence besides; and over which, for more than a hundred years now, there has raged a critical and philological battle, with victory inclining to neither side—that the poor Macpherson should have created these poems is, if possible, more startling than their claim of antiquity. If Macpherson created Ossian, he was an athlete who made one surprising leap and was palsied ever afterwards; a marksman who made a centre at his first shot, and who never afterwards could hit the target. It is well enough known that the Highlanders, like all half-civilised nations, had their legends and their minstrelsy; that they were fond of reciting poems and runes; and that the person who retained on his memory the greatest number of tales and songs brightened the gatherings round the ancient peat-fires as your Sydney Smith brightens the modern dinner. And it is astonishing how much legendary material a single memory may retain. In illustration, Dr Brown, in his "History of the Highlands," informs us that "the late Captain John Macdonald of Breakish, a native of the Island of Skye, declared upon oath, at the age of seventy-eight, that he could repeat, when a boy between twelve and fifteen years of age, (about the year 1740,) from one to two hundred Gaelic poems, differing in length and

in number of verses; and that he learned them from an old man about eighty years of age, who sang them for years to his father when he went to bed at night, and in the spring and winter before he rose in the morning." The late Dr Stuart, minister of Luss, knew "an old Highlander in the Isle of Skye, who repeated to him for three successive days, and during several hours each day, without hesitation, and with the utmost rapidity, many thousand lines of ancient poetry, and would have continued his repetitions much longer if the doctor had required him to do so." From such a raging torrent of song the doctor doubtless fled for his life. Without a doubt there was a vast quantity of poetic material existing in the islands. But more than this, when Macpherson, at the request of Home, Blair, and others, went to the Highlands to collect materials, he undoubtedly received Gaelic MSS. Mr Farquharson, (Dr Brown tells us,) Prefect of Studies at Douay College in France, was the possessor of Gaelic MSS., and in 1766 he received a copy of Macpherson's "Ossian," and Mr M'Gillivray, a student there at the time, saw them (Macpherson's "Ossian" and Mr Farquharson's MSS.) frequently collated, and heard the complaint that the translations fell very far short of the energy and beauty of the originals;

and the said Mr M'Gillivray was convinced that the MSS. contained all the poems translated by Macpherson, because he recollected very distinctly having heard Mr Farquharson say, after having read the translations, "that he had all these poems in his collection." Dr Johnson could never talk of the matter calmly. "Show me the original manuscripts," he would roar. "Let Mr Macpherson deposit the manuscript in one of the colleges at Aberdeen where there are people who can judge; and if the professors certify the authenticity, then there will be an end of the controversy." Macpherson, when his truthfulness was rudely called in question, wrapped himself up in proud silence, and disdained reply. At last, however, he submitted to the test which Dr Johnson proposed. At a bookseller's shop he left for some months the originals of his translations, intimating by public advertisement that he had done so, and stating that all persons interested in the matter might call and examine them. No one, however, called; Macpherson's pride was hurt, and he became thereafter more obstinately silent and uncommunicative than ever. There needed no such mighty pother about the production of manuscripts. It might have been seen at a glance that the Ossianic poems were not

forgeries—at all events that Macpherson did not forge them. Even in the English translation, to a great extent, the sentiments, the habits, the modes of thought described are entirely primeval; in reading it, we seem to breathe the morning air of the world. The personal existence of Ossian is, I suppose, as doubtful as the personal existence of Homer; and if he ever lived, he is great, like Homer, through his tributaries. Ossian drew into himself every lyrical runnel, he augmented himself in every way, he drained centuries of their songs; and living an oral and gipsy life, handed down from generation to generation, without being committed to writing and having their outlines determinately fixed, the authorship of these songs becomes vested in a multitude, every reciter having more or less to do with it. For centuries the floating legendary material was reshaped, added to, and altered by the changing spirit and emotion of the Celt. Reading the Ossianic fragments is like visiting the skeleton of one of the South American cities; like walking through the streets of disinterred Pompeii or Herculaneum. These poems, if rude and formless, are touching and venerable as some ruin on the waste, the names of whose builders are unknown: whose towers and walls, although not erected in accordance with the

lights of modern architecture, affect the spirit and fire the imagination far more than nobler and more recent piles; its chambers, now roofless to the day, were ages ago tenanted by life and death, joy and sorrow; its walls have been worn and rounded by time, its stones channelled and fretted by the fierce tears of winter rains; on broken arch and battlement every April for centuries has kindled a light of desert flowers; and it stands muffled with ivies, bearded with mosses, and stained with lichens by the suns of forgotten summers. So these songs are in the original—strong, simple, picturesque in decay; in Mr Macpherson's English they are hybrids and mongrels. They resemble the Castle of Dunvegan, an amorphous mass of masonry of every conceivable style of architecture, in which the ninth century jostles the nineteenth.

In these poems not only do character and habit smack of the primeval time, but there is extraordinary truth of local colouring. The Iliad is roofed by the liquid softness of an Ionian sky. In the verse of Chaucer there is eternal May and the smell of newly-blossomed English hawthorn hedges. In Ossian, in like manner, the skies are cloudy, there is a tumult of waves on the shore, the wind sings in the pine. This truth of

local colouring is a strong argument in proof of authenticity. I for one will never believe that Macpherson was more than a somewhat free translator. Despite Gibbon's sneer, I do "indulge the supposition that Ossian lived and Fingal sung;" and, more than this, it is my belief that these misty phantasmal Ossianic fragments, with their car-borne heroes that come and go like clouds on the wind, their frequent apparitions, the "stars dim-twinkling through their forms," their maidens fair and pale as lunar rainbows, are, in their own literary place, worthy of every recognition. If you think these poems exaggerated, go out at Sligachan and see what wild work the pencil of moonlight makes on a mass of shifting vapour. Does *that* seem nature or a madman's dream? Look at the billowy clouds rolling off the brow of Blaavin, all golden and on fire with the rising sun! Wordsworth's verse does not more completely mirror the Lake Country than do the poems of Ossian the terrible scenery of the Isles. Grim, and fierce, and dreary as the night-wind is the strain, for not with rose and nightingale had the old bard to do; but with the thistle waving on the ruin, the upright stones that mark the burying-places of heroes, weeping female faces white as sea-foam in the moon, the breeze mourn-

ing alone in the desert, the battles and friendships of his far-off youth, and the flight of the "dark-brown years." These poems are wonderful transcripts of Hebridean scenery. They are as full of mists as the Hebridean glens themselves. Ossian seeks his images in the vapoury wraiths. Take the following of two chiefs parted by their king:— "They sink from their king on either side, like two columns of morning mist when the sun rises between them on his glittering rocks. Dark is their rolling on either side, each towards its reedy pool." You cannot help admiring the image; and I saw the misty circumstance this very morning when the kingly sun struck the earth with his golden spear, and the cloven mists rolled backwards to their pools like guilty things.

That a large body of poetical MSS. existed in the Highlands we know; we know also that, when challenged to do so, Macpherson produced his originals; and the question arises, Was Macpherson a competent and faithful translator of these MSS.? Did he reproduce the original in all its strength and sharpness? On the whole, perhaps Macpherson translated the ancient Highland poems as faithfully as Pope translated Homer, but his version is in many respects defective and untrue. The English Ossian is Macpherson's, just as the

most popular English Iliad is Pope's. Macpherson was not a thoroughly-equipped Gaelic scholar; his version is full of blunders and misapprehensions of meaning, and he expressed himself in the fashionable poetic verbiage of his day. You find echoes of Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, and Dryden, and these echoes give his whole performance a hybrid aspect. It has a particoloured look; is a thing of odds and ends, of shreds and patches; in it antiquity and his own day are incongruously mixed—like Macbeth in a periwig, or a ruin decked out with new and garish banners. Here is Macpherson's version of a portion of the third book of Fingal:—

"Fingal beheld the son of Starno: he remembered Agandecca. For Swaran with the tears of youth had mourned his white-bosomed sister. He sent Ullin of Songs to bid him to the feast of shells. For pleasant on Fingal's soul returned the memory of the first of his loves!

"Ullin came with aged steps, and spoke to Starno's son. 'O thou that dwellest afar, surrounded like a rock with thy waves! Come to the feast of the king, and pass the day in rest. To-morrow let us fight, O Swaran, and break the echoing shields.' 'To-day,' said Starno's wrathful son, 'we break the echoing shields: to-morrow my

feast shall be spread; but Fingal shall lie on earth.' 'To-morrow let the feast be spread,' said Fingal, with a smile. 'To-day, O my sons, we shall break the echoing shields. Ossian, stand thou near my arm. Gaul, lift thy terrible sword. Fergus, bend thy crooked yew. Throw, Fillan, thy lance through heaven. Lift your shields like the darkened moon. Be your spears the meteors of death. Follow me in the path of my fame. Equal my deeds in battle.'

"As a hundred winds on Morven; as the streams of a hundred hills; as clouds fly successive over heaven; as the dark ocean assails the shore of the desert; so roaring, so vast, so terrible the armies mixed on Lena's echoing heath. The groan of the people spread over the hills; it was like the thunder of night when the clouds burst on Cona, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once on the hollow wind. Fingal rushed on in his strength, terrible as the spirit of Trenmore, when in a whirlwind he comes to Morven to see the children of his pride. The oaks resound on their mountains, and the rocks fall down before him. Dimly seen as lightens the night, he strides largely from hill to hill. Bloody was the hand of my father when he whirled the gleam of his sword. He remembered the battles of his youth. The field is wasted in the course.

"Ryno went on like a pillar of fire. Dark is the brow of Gaul. Fergus rushed forward with feet of wind. Fillan, like the mist of the hill. Ossian, like a rock, came down. I exulted in the strength of the king. Many were the deaths of my arm! dismal the gleam of my sword! My locks were not then so gray; nor trembled my hands with age. My eyes were not closed in darkness; my feet failed not in the race.

"Who can relate the deaths of the people, who the deeds of mighty heroes, when Fingal, burning in his wrath, consumed the sons of Lochlin? Groans swelled on groans from hill to hill, till night had covered all. Pale, staring like a herd of deer, the sons of Lochlin convene on Lena."

So writes Macpherson. I subjoin a more literal and faithful rendering of the passage, in which, to some extent, may be tasted the wild-honey flavour of the original:—

"Fingal descried the illustrious son of Starn,
And he remember'd the maiden of the snow:
When she fell, Swaran wept
For the young maid of brightest cheek.

"Ullin of songs (the bard) approach'd
To bid him to the feast upon the shore.
Sweet to the king of the great mountains
Was the remembrance of his first-loved maid.

"Ullin of the most aged step (the step of feeblest age)
came nigh,
And thus address'd the son of Starn:
'Thou from the land afar, thou brave,
Like, in thy mail and thy arms,
To a rock in the midst of the billows,
Come to the banquet of the chiefs;
Pass the day of calm in feasting;
To-morrow ye shall break the shields
In the strife where play the spears.'

"'This very day,' said the son of Starn, 'this very day
I shall break in the hill the spear;
To-morrow thy king shall be low in the dust,
And Swaran and his braves shall banquet.'

"'To-morrow let the hero feast,'
Smiling said the king of Morven;
'To-day let us fight the battle in the hill,
And break the mighty shield.
Ossian, stand thou by my side;
Gall, thou great one, lift thy hand;
Fergus, draw thy swift-speeding string,
Fillan, throw thy matchless lance;
Lift your shields aloft
As the moon in shadow in the sky;
Be your spears as the herald of death.
Follow, follow me in my renown;
Be as hosts (as hundreds) in the conflict.'

"As a hundred winds in the oak of Morven;
As a hundred streams from the steep-sided mountain;
As clouds gathering thick and black;
As the great ocean pouring on the shore,
So broad, roaring, dark and fierce,
Met the braves, a-fire, on Lena.
The shout of the hosts on the shoulders (bones) of the
mountains

Was as a torrent in a night of storm
When bursts the cloud on glenny Cona,
And a thousand ghosts are shrieking loud
On the viewless crooked wind of the cairns.

"Swiftly the king advanced in his might,
As the spirit of Trenmore, pitiless spectre,
When he comes in the whirl-blast of the billows
To Morven, the land of his loved sires.
The oak resounds on the mountain,
Before him falls the rock of the hills;
Through the lightning-flash the spirit is seen—
His great steps are from cairn to cairn.

"Bloody, I ween, was my sire in the field,
When he drew with might his sword;
The king remember'd his youth,
When he fought the combat of the glens.

"Ryno sped as the fire of the sky,
Gloomy and black was Gall, (wholly black;)
Fergus rush'd as the wind on the mountain;
Fillan advanced as the mist on the woods;
Ossian was as a pillar of rock in the combat.
My soul exulted in the king,
Many were the deaths and dismal
'Neath the lightning of my great sword in the strife.

"My locks were not then so gray,
Nor shook my hand with age.
The light of my eye was unquench'd,
And ave unwearied in travel was my foot.

"Who will tell of the deaths of the people?
Who the deeds of the mighty chiefs?
When kindled to wrath was the king;
Lochlin was consumed on the side of the mountain.
Sound on sound rose from the hosts,

Till fell on the waves the night.
Feeble, trembling, and pale as (hunted) deer,
Lochlin gather'd on heath-clad Lena."*

To English readers the sun of Ossian shines dimly through a mist of verbiage. It is to be hoped that the mist will one day be removed—it is the bounden duty of one of Ossian's learned countrymen to remove it.

It is not to be supposed that the Ossianic legends are repeated often now around the island peat-fires; but many are told resembling in essentials those which Dr Dasent has translated to us from the Norse. As the northern nations have a common flora, so they have a common legendary literature. Supernaturalism belongs to their tales as the aurora borealis belongs to their skies. Those stories I have heard in Skye, and many others, springing from the same roots, I have had related to me in the Lowlands and in Ireland. They are full of witches and wizards; of great wild giants crying out, "Hiv! Haw Hoagraich! It is a drink of thy blood that quenches my thirst this night;" of wonderful castles with turrets and banqueting halls; of magic spells, and the souls of men and women dolefully imprisoned in shapes of beast and

* For this translation I am indebted to my learned and accomplished friend the Rev. Mr Macpherson of Inverary.

bird. As tales few of them can be considered perfect; the supernatural element is strong in many, but frequently it breaks down under some prosaic or ludicrous circumstance: the spell exhales somehow, and you care not to read further. Now and then a spiritual and ghastly imagination passes into a revolting familiarity and destroys itself. In these stories all times and conditions of life are curiously mixed, and this mixture shows the passage of the story from tongue to tongue through generations. If you discover on the bleak Skye shore a log of wood with Indian carvings peeping through a crust of native barnacles, it needs no prophet to see that it has crossed the Atlantic. Confining your attention merely to Skye—to the place in which the log is found—the Indian carvings are an anachronism; but there is no anachronism when you arrive at the idea that the log belongs to another continent, and that it has reached its final resting-place through blowing winds and tossing waves. These old Highland stories, beginning in antiquity, and quaintly ending with a touch of the present, are lessons in the science of criticism. In a ballad the presence of an anachronism, the cropping out of a comparatively modern touch of manners or detail of dress, does not in the least invalidate

the claim of the ballad to antiquity—provided it can be proved that before being committed to writing it had led an oral existence. Every ballad existing in the popular memory takes the colour of the periods through which it has lived, just as a stream takes the colour of the different soils through which it flows. The other year Mr Robert Chambers attempted to throw discredit on the alleged antiquity of Sir Patrick Spens from the following verse:—

> "Oh, laith, laith were our guid Scots lords
> To weet their cork-heel'd shoon;
> But lang ere a' the play was o'er,
> They wat their heads abune,"—

cork-heeled shoes having been worn neither by the Scots lords, nor by the lords of any other nation, so early as the reign of Alexander III., at which period Sir Patrick Spens sailed on his disastrous voyage. But the appearance of such a comparatively modern detail of personal attire throws no discredit on the antiquity of the ballad, because in its oral transmission each singer or reciter would naturally equip the Scots lords in the particular kind of shoes which the Scots lords wore in his own day Anachronism of this kind proves nothing, because such anachronism is involved in the very nature of the case, and must occur in every old composition

which is frequently recited, and the terms of which have not been definitely fixed by writing. In the old Highland stories to which I allude, the wildest anachronisms are of the most frequent occurrence; with the most utter scorn of historical accuracy all the periods are jumbled together; they resemble the dance on the outside stage of a booth at a country fair before the performances begin, in which the mailed crusader, King Richard III., a barmaid, and a modern "swell" meet, and mingle, and cross hands with the most perfect familiarity and absence from surprise. And some of those violations of historical accuracy are instructive enough, and throw some light on the cork-heeled shoes of the Scots lords in the ballad. In one story a mermaiden and a General in the British army are represented as in love with each other and holding clandestine meetings. Here is an anachronism with a vengeance, enough to make Mr Robert Chambers stare and gasp. How would he compute the age of that story? Would he make it as old as the mermaiden or as modern as the British General? Personally, I have not the slightest doubt that the story is old, and that in its original form it concerned itself with certain love passages between a mermaiden and a great warrior. But the story lived for generations as tradition, was

told around the Skye peat-fires, and each relater gave it something of his own, some touch drawn from contemporary life. The mermaiden remains of course, for she is *sui generis;* search nature and for her you can find no equivalent—you can't translate her into anything else. With the warrior it is entirely different; he loses spear and shield, and grows naturally into the modern General with gilded spur, scarlet coat, and cocked hat with plumes. The same sort of change, arising from the substitution of modern for ancient details, of modern equivalents for ancient facts, must go on in every song or narrative which is orally transmitted from generation to generation.

Many of these stories, even when they are imperfect in themselves, or resemble those told elsewhere, are curiously coloured by Celtic scenery and pervaded by Celtic imagination. In listening to them, one is specially impressed by a bare, desolate, woodless country; and this impression is not produced by any formal statement of fact; it arises partly from the paucity of actors in the stories, and partly from the desert spaces over which the actors travel, and partly from the number of carrion crows, and ravens, and malign hill-foxes which they encounter in their journeyings. The "hoody," as the crow is called, hops and flits

and croaks through all the stories. His black wing is seen everywhere. And it is the frequent appearance of these beasts and birds, never familiar, never domesticated, always outside the dwelling, and of evil omen when they fly or steal across the path, which gives to the stories much of their weird and direful character. The Celt has not yet subdued nature. He trembles before the unknown powers. He cannot be sportive for the fear that is in his heart. In his legends there is no merry Puck, no Ariel, no Robin Goodfellow, no half-benevolent, half-malignant Brownie even. These creatures live in imaginations more emanci pated from fear. The mists blind the Celt on his perilous mountain-side, the sea is smitten white on his rocks, the wind bends and dwarfs his pine wood; and as Nature is cruel to him, and as his light and heat are gathered from the moor, and his most plenteous food from the whirlpool and the foam, we need not be surprised that few are the gracious shapes that haunt his fancy.

THE SECOND SIGHT.

THE Quirang is one of the wonderful sights of Skye, and if you once visit it you will believe ever afterwards the misty and spectral Ossian to be authentic. The Quirang is a nightmare of nature; it resembles one of Nat Lee's mad tragedies; it might be the scene of a Walpurgis night; on it might be held a Norway witch's Sabbath. Architecture is frozen music, it is said; the Quirang is frozen terror and superstition. 'Tis a huge spire or cathedral of rock some thousand feet in height, with rocky spires or needles sticking out of it. Macbeth's weird sisters stand on the blasted heath, and Quirang stands in a region as wild as itself. The country around is strange and abnormal, rising into rocky ridges here, like the spine of some huge animal, sinking into hollows there, with pools in the hollows—glimmering almost always through drifts of misty rain. On a clear day, with a bright sun above, the ascent of Quirang may be pleasant enough; but a clear day

you seldom find, for on spectral precipices and sharp-pointed rocky needles, the weeping clouds of the Atlantic have made their chosen home. When you ascend, with every ledge and block slippery, every runnel a torrent, the wind taking liberties with your cap and making your plaid stream like a meteor to the troubled air, white tormented mists boiling up from black chasms and caldrons, rain making disastrous twilight of noon-day,—horror shoots through your pulses, your brain swims on the giddy pathway, and the thought of your room in the vapoury under world rushes across the soul like the fallen Adam's remembrance of his paradise. Then you learn, if you never learned before, that nature is not always gracious; that not always does she out-stretch herself in low-lying bounteous lands, over which sober sunsets redden and heavy-uddered cattle low; but that she has fierce hysterical moods in which she congeals into granite precipice and peak, and draws around herself and her companions the winds that moan and bluster, veils of livid rains. If you are an Englishman you will habitually know her in her gracious, if a Skye man in her fiercer, moods.

No one is independent of scenery and climate. Men are racy of the soil in which they grow, even as grapes are. A Saxon nurtured in fat Kent

or Sussex, amid flats of heavy wheat and acorn-dropping oaks, must of necessity be a different creature from the Celt who gathers his sustenance from the bleak sea-board, and who is daily drenched by the rain-cloud from Cuchullin. The one, at his best, becomes a broad-shouldered, clear-eyed, ruddy-faced man, slightly obese, who meets danger gleefully, because he has had little experience of it, and because his conditions being hitherto easy, he naturally assumes that everything will go well with him;—at worst, a porker contented with his mast. The other, take him at his best, of sharper spirit, because it has been more keenly whetted on difficulty; if not more intrepid, at least more consciously so; of sadder mood habitually, but *when* happy, happier, as the gloomier the cloud the more dazzling the rainbow;—at his worst, either beaten down, subdued, and nerveless, or gaunt, suspicious, and crafty, like the belly-pinched wolf. On the whole, the Saxon is likely to be the more sensual; the Celt the more superstitious: the Saxon will probably be prosaic, dwelling in the circle of the seen and the tangible; the Celt a poet: while the anger of the Saxon is slow and abiding, like the burning of coal; the anger of the Celt is swift and transient, like the flame that consumes the dried heather: both

are superior to death when occasion comes—the Saxon from a grand obtuseness which ignores the fact; the Celt, because he has been in constant communion with it, and because he has seen, measured, and overcome it. The Celt is the most melancholy of men; he has turned everything to superstitious uses, and every object of nature, even the unreasoning dreams of sleep, are mirrors which flash back death upon him. He, the least of all men, requires to be reminded that he is mortal. The howling of his dog will do him that service.

In the stories which are told round the island peat-fires it is abundantly apparent that the Celt has not yet subdued nature. In these stories you can detect a curious subtle hostility between man and his environments; a fear of them, a want of absolute trust in them. In these stories and songs man is not at home in the world. Nature is too strong for him; she rebukes and crushes him. The Elements, however calm and beautiful they may appear for the moment, are malign and deceitful at heart, and merely bide their time. They are like the paw of the cat—soft and velvety, but with concealed talons that scratch when least expected. And this curious relation between man and nature grows out of the climatic conditions and the forms of Hebridean life. In his usual avocations the Isles-

man rubs clothes with death as he would with an acquaintance. Gathering wild fowl, he hangs, like a spider on its thread, over a precipice on which the sea is beating a hundred feet beneath. In his crazy boat he adventures into whirlpool and foam. He is among the hills when the snow comes down making everything unfamiliar, and stifling the strayed wanderer. Thus death is ever near him, and that consciousness turns everything to omen. The mist creeping along the hill-side by moonlight is an apparition. In the roar of the waterfall, or the murmur of the swollen ford, he hears the water spirit calling out for the man for whom it has waited so long. He sees death-candles burning on the sea, marking the place at which a boat will be upset by some sudden squall. He hears spectral hammers clinking in an out-house, and he knows that ghostly artificers are preparing a coffin there. Ghostly fingers tap at his window, ghostly feet are about his door; at midnight his furniture cries out as if it had seen a sight and could not restrain itself. Even his dreams are prophetic, and point ghastly issues for himself or for others. And just as there are poets who are more open to beauty than other men, and whose duty and delight it is to set forth that beauty anew; so in the Hebrides there are seers who bear the same

relation to the other world that the poet bears to beauty, who are cognisant of its secrets, and who make those secrets known. The seer does not inherit his power. It comes upon him at haphazard, as genius or as personal beauty might come. He is a lonely man amongst his fellows; apparitions cross his path at noon-day; he never knows into what a ghastly something the commonest object may transform itself—the table he sits at may suddenly become the resting-place of a coffin; and the man who laughs in his cups with him may, in the twinkling of an eye, wear a death-shroud up to his throat. He hears river voices prophesying death, and shadowy and silent funeral processions are continually defiling before him. When the seer beholds a vision his companions know it; for "the inner part of his eyelids turn so far upwards that, after the object disappears, he must draw them down with his fingers, and sometimes employs others to draw them down, which he finds to be much the easier way." From long experience of these visions, and by noticing how closely or tardily fulfilment has trodden upon their heels, the seer can extract the meaning of the apparition that flashes upon him, and predict the period of its accomplishment. Other people can make nothing of them, but *he* reads them, as the sailor in posses-

sion of the signal-book reads the signal flying at the peak of the High Admiral. These visions, it would appear, conform to rules, like everything else. If a vision be seen early in a morning, it will be accomplished in a few hours,—if at noon, it will usually be accomplished that day,—if in the evening, that night,—if after candles are lighted, certainly that night. When a shroud is seen about a person it is a sure prognostication of death. And the period of death is estimated by the height of the shroud about the body. If it lies about the legs, death is not to be expected before the expiry of a year, and perhaps it may be deferred a few months longer. If it is seen near the head, death will occur in a few days, perhaps in a few hours. To see houses and trees in a desert place is a sign that buildings will be erected there anon. To see a spark of fire falling on the arms or breast of a person is the sign that a dead child will shortly be in the arms of those persons. To see a seat empty at the time of sitting in it is a sign of that person's death being at hand. The seers are said to be extremely temperate in habit; they are neither drunkards nor gluttons; they are not subject to convulsions nor hysterical fits; there are no madmen amongst them nor has a seer ever been known to commit suicide.

The literature of the second sight is extremely curious. The writers have perfect faith in the examples they adduce; but their examples are far from satisfactory. They are seldom obtained at first hand, they almost always live on hearsay; and even if everything be true, the professed fulfilment seems nothing other than a rather singular coincidence. Still these stories are devoutly believed in Skye, and it is almost as perilous to doubt the existence of a Skyeman's ghost as to doubt the existence of a Skyeman's ancestor. In "Treatises on the Second Sight," very curious tracts, compiled by Theophilus Insulanus, Rev. Mr Frazer, Mr Martin, and John Aubrey, Esq., F.R.S., and which hint that a disbelief in apparitions is tantamount to disbelief in the immortality of the soul, the following stories are related:—

"John Campbell, younger of Ardsliguish, in Ardnamorchuann, in the year 1729, returning home with Duncan Campbell, his brother, since deceased, as they drew near the house, in a plain surrounded with bushes of wood, where they intended to discharge their fusees at a mark, observed a young girl, whom they knew to be one of their domestics, crossing the plain, and having called her by name, she did not answer, but ran into the thicket. As the two brothers had been some days from

home, and willing to know what happened in their absence, the youngest, John, pursued after, but could not find her. Immediately, as they arrived at home, having acquainted their mother they saw the said girl, and called after her, but she avoided their search, and would not speak to them; upon which they were told she departed this life that same day. I had this relation from James Campbell in Girgudale, a young man of known modesty and candour, who had the story at several times from the said John Campbell."

"Mr Anderson assured me, that upon the 16th of April 1746, (being the day on which his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland obtained a glorious victory over the rebels at Culloden,) as he lay in bed with his spouse towards the dawning of the day, he heard very audibly a voice at his bed-head inquiring if he was awake; who answered he was, but then took no further notice of it. A little time thereafter, the voice repeated, with greater vehemence, if he was awake. And he answering, as formerly, he was, there was some stop, when the voice repeated louder, asking the same question, and he making the same answer, but asking what the voice had to say; upon which it replied, The prince is defeated, defeated, defeated! And in less than forty-eight hours there-

after an express carried the welcome tidings of the fact into the country."

"Captain Macdonald of Castletown (allowed by all his acquaintances to be a person of consummate integrity) informed me that a Knoydart man (being on board of a vessel at anchor in the sound of the Island Oransay) went under night out of the cabin to the deck, and being missed by his company, some of them went to call him down; but not finding him, concluded that he had dropt from the ship's side. When day came on, they got a long line furnished with hooks, (from a tenant's house close by the shore,) which having cast from the ship's side, some of the hooks got hold of his clothes, so that they got the corpse taken up. The owner of the long line told Captain Macdonald that for a quarter of a year before that accident happened, he himself and his domestics, on every calm night, would hear lamentable cries at the shore where the corpse was landed; and not only so, but the long lines that took up the corpse being hung on a pin in his house, all of them would hear an odd jingling of the hooks before and after going to bed, and that without any person, dog, or cat touching them; and at other times, with fire light, see the long lines covered over with lucid globules,

such as are seen drop from oars rowing under night."

The foregoing are examples of the general superstitions that prevail in the islands ; those that follow relate to the second sight.

"The Lady Coll informed me that one M'Lean of Knock, an elderly reputable gentleman, living on their estate, as he walked in the fields before sunset, he saw a neighbouring person, who had been sick for a long time, coming that way, accompanied by another man ; and, as they drew nearer, he asked them some questions, and how far they intended to go. The first answered they were to travel forward to a village he named, and then pursued his journey with a more than ordinary pace. Next day, early in the morning, he was invited to his neighbour's interment, which surprised him much, as he had seen and spoke with him the evening before ; but was told by the messenger that came for him, the deceased person had been confined to his bed for seven weeks, and that he departed this life a little before sunset, much about the time he saw him in a vision the preceding day."

"Margaret Macleod, an honest woman advanced in years, informed me that when she was a young woman in the family of Grishornish, a dairy-maid, who daily used to herd the calves in a park close

to the house, observed, at different times, a woman resembling herself in shape and attire, walking solitarily at no great distance from her; and being surprised at the apparition, to make further trial, she put the back part of her garment foremost, and anon the phantom was dressed in the same manner, which made her uneasy, believing it portended some fatal consequence to herself. In a short time thereafter she was seized with a fever, which brought her to her end; but before her sickness, and on her deathbed, declared this second sight to several."

"Neil Betton, a sober, judicious person, and elder in the session of Diurinish, informed me, as he had it from the deceased Mr Kenneth Betton, late minister in Trotternish, that a farmer in the village of Airaidh, on the west side of the country, being towards evening to quit his work, he observed a traveller coming towards him as he stood close to the highway; and, as he knew the man, waited his coming up; but when he began to speak with him, the traveller broke off the road abruptly to the shore that was hard by; which, how soon he entered, he gave a loud cry; and, having proceeded on the shore, gave a loud cry at the middle of it, and so went on until he came to a river running through the middle of it, which he no sooner entered than

he gave a third cry, and then saw him no more. On the farmer's coming home he told all that he had heard and seen to those of his household: so the story spread, until from hand to hand it came to the person's own knowledge, who, having seen the farmer afterwards, inquired of him narrowly about it, who owned and told the same as above. In less than a year thereafter, the same man, going with two more to cut wattling for creels, in Coille-na-Skiddil, he and they were drowned in the river where he heard him give the last cry."

"Some of the inhabitants of Harris sailing round the Isle of Skye, with a design to go to the opposite mainland, were strangely surprised with an apparition of two men hanging down by the ropes that secured the mast, but could not conjecture what it meant. They pursued the voyage; but the wind turned contrary, and so forced them into Broadford, in the Isle of Skye, where they found Sir Donald Macdonald keeping a sheriff's court, and two criminals receiving sentence of death there. The ropes and masts of that very boat were made use of to hang those criminals."

Such are some of the stories laboriously gathered together and set down in perfect good faith by Theophilus Insulanus. It will be seen that they are loosely reported, are always at second or third

hand, and that, if the original teller of the stories could be placed in the witness-box, a strict cross-examination would make sad havoc with him and them. But although sufficiently ridiculous and foolish in themselves, they exemplify the strange ghostly atmosphere which pervades the western islands. Every one of the people amongst whom I now live believes in apparitions and the second sight. Mr M'Ian has seen a ghost himself, but he will not willingly speak about it. A woman gifted with the second sight dwells in one of the smoking turf huts on the shore. At night, round a precipitous rock that overhangs the sea, about a hundred yards from the house, a light was often seen to glide, and evil was apprehended. For years the patient light abode there. At last a boy, the son of one of the cotters, climbing about the rock, missed his footing, fell into the sea and was drowned, and from that hour the light was never more visible. At a ford up amongst the hills, the people tell me doleful cries have been heard at intervals for years. The stream has waited long for its victim, but I am assured that it will get it at last. That a man will yet be drowned there is an article of faith amongst the cotters. But who? I suspect *I* am regarded as the likely person. Perhaps the withered crone down in the turf hut yonder knows the fea-

tures of the doomed man. This prevailing superstitious feeling takes curious possession of one somehow. You cannot live in a ghostly atmosphere without being more or less affected by it. Lying a-bed you don't like to hear the furniture of your bedroom creak. At sunset you are suspicious of the prodigious shadow that stalks alongside of you across the gold-green fields. You become more than usually impressed by the multitudinous and unknown voices of the night. Gradually you get the idea that you and nature are alien; and it is in that feeling of alienation that superstition lives.

Father M'Crimmon and I had been out rabbit-shooting, and, tired of the sport, we sat down to rest on a grassy knoll. The ghostly island stories had taken possession of my mind, and as we sat and smoked I inquired if the priest was a believer in ghosts generally and in the second sight in particular. The gaunt, solemn-voiced, melancholy-eyed man replied that he believed in the existence of ghosts just as he believed in the existence of America—he had never seen America, he had never seen a ghost, but the existence of both he considered was amply borne out by testimony. "I know there is such a thing as the second sight," he went on, "because I have had cognisance of it myself. Six or seven years ago I was staying with

my friend Mr M'Ian, as I am staying now, and just as we were sipping a tumbler of punch after dinner we heard a great uproar outside. We went out and found all the farm-servants standing on the grass and gazing seawards. On inquiry, we learned that two brothers, M'Millan by name, who lived down at Stonefield, beyond the point yonder, fishermen by trade, and well versed in the management of a boat, had come up to the islands here to gather razor-fish for bait. When they had secured plenty of bait, they steered for home, although a stiff breeze was blowing. They kept a full sail on, and went straight on the wind. A small boy, Hector, who was employed in herding cows, was watching the boat trying to double the point. All at once he came running into the kitchen where the farm-servants were at dinner. 'Men, men,' he cried, 'come out fast; M'Millan's boat is sinking—I saw her heel over.' Of course the hinds came rushing out bareheaded, and it was the noise they made that disturbed my friend and myself at our punch. All this we gathered in less time than I have taken to tell you. We looked narrowly seaward, but no boat was to be seen. Mr M'Ian brought out his telescope, and still the sea remained perfectly blue and bare. Neither M'Ian nor his servants could be brought to believe Hector's story—they thought

it extremely unlikely that on a comparatively calm day any harm could befall such experienced sailors. It was universally agreed that the boat *had* rounded the point, and Mr M'Ian rated the herd-boy for raising a false alarm. Hector still persisting that he had seen the boat capsize and go down, got his ears soundly boxed for his obstinacy, and was sent whimpering away to his cows, and enjoined in future to mind his own business. Then the servants returned to their dinner in the kitchen, and, going back with me to our punch, which had become somewhat cold, Mr M'Ian resumed his story of the eagle that used to come down the glen in the early mornings and carry away his poultry, and told how he shot it at last and found that it measured six feet from wing-tip to wing-tip.

"But although Hector got his ears boxed it turned out that he had in all probability spoken the truth. Towards the evening of next day the M'Millan sisters came up to the house to inquire after the boat, which had never reached home. The poor girls were in a dreadful state when they were told that their brothers' boat had left the islands the previous afternoon, and what Hector the cow-herd averred he had seen. Still there was room for hope; it was possible that Hector was mistaken, it

was possible that the M'Millans might have gone somewhere, or been forced to take shelter somewhere—and so the two sisters, mustering up the best heart they could, went across the hill to Stonefield when the sun was setting, and the sea a sheet of gold leaf, and looking as it could never be angry or have the heart to drown anything.

" Days passed, and the boat never came home, nor did the brothers. It was on Friday that the M'Millans sailed away on the fresh breeze, and on the Wednesday following the bay down there was a sorry sight. The missing sailors were brave, good-looking, merry-hearted, and were liked along the whole coast; and on the Wednesday I speak of no fewer than two hundred and fifty boats were sailing slowly up and down, crossing and re-crossing, trawling for the bodies. I remember the day perfectly. It was dull and sultry, with but little sunshine; the hills over there (Blaavin and the others) were standing dimly in a smoke of heat; and on the smooth pallid sea the mournful multitude of black boats were moving slowly up and down, across and back again. In each boat two men pulled, and the third sat in the stern with the trawling-irons. The day was perfectly still, and I could hear through the heated air the solemn pulses of the oars. The bay was black with the

slowly-crawling boats. A sorry sight," said the good priest, filling his second pipe from a tobacco-pouch made of otter's skin.

"I don't know how it was," went on the Father, holding his newly-filled pipe between his forefinger and thumb; "but looking on the black dots of boats, and hearing the sound of their oars, I remembered that old Mirren, who lived in one of the turf huts yonder, had the second sight; and so I thought I would go down and see her. When I got to the hut, I met Mirren coming up from the shore with a basket full of whelks, which she had been gathering for dinner. I went into the hut along with her, and sat down. 'There's a sad business in the bay to-day,' said I. 'A sad business,' said Mirren, as she laid down her basket. 'Will they get the bodies?' Mirren shook her head. 'The bodies are not there to get; they have floated out past Rum to the main ocean.' 'How do you know?' 'Going out to the shore about a month ago I heard a scream, and, looking up, saw a boat off the point, with two men in it, caught in a squall, and going down. When the boat sank the men still remained in it—the one entangled in the fishing-net, the other in the ropes of the sails. I saw them float out to the main sea between the two wines,'—that's a literal translation," said the Father, parenthetically. "You have seen two liquors

in a glass—the one floating on the top of the other? Very well; there are two currents in the sea, and when my people wish to describe anything sinking down and floating between these two currents, they use the image of two liquors in a wine-glass. Oh, it 's a fine language the Gaelic, and admirably adapted for poetical purposes,—but to return. Mirren told me that she saw the bodies float out to sea between the two wines, and that the trawling boats might trawl for ever in the bay before they would get what they wanted. When evening came, the boats returned home without having found the bodies of the drowned M'Millans. Well," and here the Father lighted his pipe, " six weeks after, a capsized boat was thrown on the shore in Uist, with two corpses inside,—one entangled in the fishing-net, the other in the ropes of the sails. It was the M'Millans' boat, and it was the two brothers who were inside. Their faces were all eaten away by the dog-fishes; but the people who had done business with them in Uist identified them by their clothes. This I know to be true," said the Father emphatically, and shutting the door on all argument or hint of scepticism. "And now, if you are not too tired, suppose we try our luck in the copses down there? 'Twas a famous place for rabbits when I was here last year."

IN A SKYE BOTHY.

I AM quite alone here. England may have been invaded and London sacked, for aught I know. Several weeks since a newspaper, accidentally blown to my solitude, informed me that the *Great Eastern*, with the second American telegraphic cable on board, had got under way, and was about to proceed to sea. There is great joy, I perceive. Human nature stands astonished at itself—felicitates itself on its remarkable talent, and will for months to come complacently purr over its achievement in magazines and reviews. A fine world, messieurs, that will attain to heaven—if in the power of steam. A very fine world; yet for all that, I have withdrawn from it for a time, and would rather not hear of its remarkable exploits. In my present mood, I do not value them the coil of vapour on the brow of Blaavin, which, as I gaze, smoulders into nothing in the fire of sunrise.

Goethe informs us that in his youth he loved to shelter himself in the Scripture narratives from the

marching and counter-marching of armies, the cannonading, fighting, and retreating, that went on everywhere around him. He shut his eyes, as it were, and a whole war-convulsed Europe wheeled away into silence and distance; and in its place, lo! the patriarchs, with their tawny tents, their man-servants and maid-servants, and countless flocks in perceptible procession whitening the Syrian plains. In this, my green solitude, I appreciate the full sweetness of the passage. Everything here is silent as the Bible plains themselves. I am cut off from former scenes and associates as by the sullen Styx and the grim ferrying of Charon's boat. The noise of the world does not touch me. I live too far inland to hear the thunder of the reef. To this place no postman comes; no tax-gatherer. This region never heard the sound of the church-going bell. The land is Pagan as when the yellow-haired Norseman landed a thousand years ago. I almost feel a Pagan myself. Not using a notched stick, I have lost all count of time, and don't know Saturday from Sunday. Civilisation is like a soldier's stock, it makes you carry your head a good deal higher, makes the angels weep a little more at your fantastic tricks, and half suffocates you the while. I have thrown it away, and breathe freely. My bed is the heather, my mirror the

stream from the hills, my comb and brush the sea breeze, my watch the sun, my theatre the sunset, and my evening service—not without a rude natural religion in it—watching the pinnacles of the hills of Cuchullin sharpening in intense purple against the pallid orange of the sky, or listening to the melancholy voices of the sea-birds and the tide; that over, I am asleep, till touched by the earliest splendour of the dawn. I am, not without reason, hugely enamoured of my vagabond existence.

My bothy is situated on the shores of one of the Lochs that intersect Skye. The coast is bare and rocky, hollowed into fantastic chambers; and when the tide is making, every cavern murmurs like a sea-shell. The land, from frequent rain, green as emerald, rises into soft pastoral heights, and about a mile inland soars suddenly up into peaks of bastard marble, white as the cloud under which the lark sings at noon, and bathed in rosy light at sunset. In front are the Cuchullin hills and the monstrous peak of Blaavin; then the green strath runs narrowing out to sea, and the Island of Rum, with a white cloud upon it, stretches like a gigantic shadow across the entrance of the loch, and completes the scene. Twice every twenty-four hours the Atlantic tide sets in upon the hollowed shores;

HART-O-CORRY, CUCHULLIN HILLS

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twice is the sea withdrawn, leaving spaces of smooth sand on which mermaids, with golden combs, might sleek alluring tresses; and black rocks, heaped with brown dulse and tangle, and lovely ocean blooms of purple and orange; and bare islets—marked at full of tide by a glimmer of pale green amid the universal sparkle—where most the sea-fowl love to congregate. To these islets, on favourable evenings, come the crows, and sit in sable parliament; business despatched, they start into air as at a gun, and stream away through the sunset to their roosting-place in the Armadale woods. The shore supplies for me the place of books and companions. Of course Blaavin and the Cuchullin hills are the chief attractions, and I never weary watching them. In the morning they wear a great white caftan of mist; but that lifts away before noon, and they stand with all their scars and passionate torrent-lines bare to the blue heavens, with perhaps a solitary shoulder for a moment gleaming wet to the sunlight. After a while a vapour begins to steam up from their abysses, gathering itself into strange shapes, knotting and twisting itself like smoke; while above, the terrible crests are now lost, now revealed, in a stream of flying rack. In an hour a wall of rain, gray as granite, opaque as iron to the eye, stands up from sea

to heaven. The loch is roughening before the wind, and the islets, black dots a second ago, are patches of roaring foam. You hear fierce sound of its coming. Anon, the lashing tempest sweeps over you, and looking behind, up the long inland glen, you can see the birch-woods and over the sides of the hills, driven on the wind, the white smoke of the rain. Though fierce as a charge of Highland bayonets these squalls are seldom of long duration, and you bless them when you creep from your shelter, for out comes the sun, and the birch-woods are twinkling, and more intensely flash the levels of the sea, and at a stroke the clouds are scattered from the wet brow of Blaavin, and to the whole a new element has been added; the voice of the swollen stream as it rushes red over a hundred tiny cataracts, and roars river-broad into the sea, making turbid the azure. Then I have my amusements in this solitary place. The mountains are of course open, and this morning, at dawn, a roe swept past me like the wind, with its nose to the dewy ground—"tracking," they call it here. Above all, I can wander on the ebbed beach. Hogg speaks of that

> "Undefined and mingled hum,
> Voice of the desert, never dumb."

But far more than the murmuring and insecty air

of the moorland does the wet *chirk-chirking* of the living shore give one the idea of crowded and multitudinous life. Did the reader ever hunt razor-fish?—not sport like tiger-hunting, I admit; yet it has its pleasures and excitements, and can kill a forenoon for an idle man agreeably. On the wet sands yonder the razor-fish are spouting like the fountains at Versailles on a *fête* day. The shy fellow sinks on discharging his watery *feu de joie.* If you are quickly after him through the sand, you catch him, and then comes the tug of war. Address and dexterity are required. If you pull vigorously, he slips out of his sheath a "mother-naked" mollusc, and escapes. If you do your spiriting gently, you drag him up to light, a long thin case, with a white fishy bulb protruding at one end like a root. Rinse him in sea water, toss him into your basket, and plunge after another watery flash. These razor-fish are excellent eating, the people say, and when used as bait no fish that swims the ocean stream—cod, whiting, haddock, flat skate, broad-shouldered crimson bream—no, not the detested dog-fish himself, this summer swarming in every Loch and becursed by every fisherman—can keep himself off the hook, and in an hour your boat is laden with glittering spoil. Then, if you take your gun to the low islands—and you

can go dry-shod at ebb of tide—you have your chance of sea-fowl. Gulls of all kinds are there, dookers and divers of every description, flocks of shy curlews, and specimens of a hundred tribes to which my limited ornithological knowledge cannot furnish a name. The solan goose yonder falls from heaven into the water like a meteor-stone. See the solitary scart, with long narrow wing and outstretched neck, shooting towards some distant promontory. Anon, high above head, come wheeling a covey of lovely sea-swallows. You fire, one flutters down, never more to skim the horizon or to dip in the sea-sparkle. Lift it up; is it not beautiful? The wild, keen eye is closed, but you see the delicate slate-colour of the wings, and the long tail-feathers white as the creaming foam. There is a stain of blood on the breast, hardly brighter than the scarlet of its beak and feet. Lay it down, for its companions are dashing round and round, uttering harsh cries of rage and sorrow; and had you the heart, you could shoot them one by one. At ebb of tide wild-looking children, from turf cabins on the hill-side, come down to hunt shell-fish. Even now a troop is busy; how their shrill voices go the while! Old Effie I see is out to-day, quite a picturesque object, with her white cap and red shawl. With a tin can in one hand,

an old reaping-hook in the other, she goes poking among the tangle. Let us see what sport she has had. She turns round at our salutation—very old, old almost as the worn rocks around. She might have been the wife of Wordsworth's "Leech-gatherer." Her can is sprawling with brown crabs; and, opening her apron, she exhibits a large black and blue lobster—a fellow such as she alone can capture. A queer woman is Effie, and an awesome. She is familiar with ghosts and apparitions. She can relate legends that have power over the superstitious blood, and with little coaxing will sing those wild Gaelic songs of hers—of dead lights on the sea, of fishing-boats going down in squalls, of unburied bodies tossing day and night upon the gray peaks of the waves, and of girls that pray God to lay them by the sides of their drowned lovers, although for them should never rise mass nor chant, and although their flesh should be torn asunder by the wild fishes of the sea.

Rain is my enemy here; and at this writing I am suffering siege. For three days this rickety dwelling has stood assault of wind and rain. Yesterday a blast breached the door, and the tenement fluttered for a moment like an umbrella caught in a gust. All seemed lost; but the door was got closed again, heavily barred across, and the enemy foiled.

An entrance, however, had been effected, and that portion of the attacking column which I had imprisoned by my dexterous manœuvre, maddened itself into whirlwind, rushed up the chimney, scattering my turf-fire as it went, and so escaped. Since that time the windy columns have retired to the gorges of the hills, where I can hear them howl at intervals; and the only thing I am exposed to is the musketry of the rain. How viciously the small shot peppers the walls! Here must I wait till the cloudy armament breaks up. One's own mind is a dull companion in such circumstances. A Sheridan himself—wont with his wit to brighten the feast, whose mind is a phosphorescent sea, dark in its rest, but when touched giving out a flash of splendour for response—if cooped up here would be dull as a Lincolnshire fen at midnight, unenlivened by a single Jack-o'-Lantern. Books are the only refuge on a rainy day; but in Skye bothies books are rare. To me, however, the gods have proved kind—for in my sore need I found on a shelf here two volumes of the old *Monthly Review*, and I have sauntered through those dingy literary catacombs with considerable satisfaction. What a strange set of old fogies the writers are! To read them is like conversing with the antediluvians. Their opinions have fallen into disuse long ago, and

resemble to-day the rusty armour and gimcracks of an old curiosity shop. Mr Henry Rogers has written a fine essay on the "*Glory and Vanity* of Literature"—in my own thoughts, out of this dingy material before me I can frame a finer. These essays and criticisms were thought brilliant, I suppose, when they appeared last century; and authors praised therein doubtless considered themselves rather handsome flies preserved in pure critical amber for the inspection and admiration of posterity. The volumes were published, I notice, from 1790 to 1792, and exhibit a period of wonderful literary activity. Not to speak of novels, histories, travels, farces, tragedies, upwards of two hundred poems, short and long, are brought to judgment; and several of these—with their names and the names of their authors I have, during the last two days, made acquaintance for the first time—are assured of immortality. Perhaps they deserved it; but they have gone down like the steamship *President* and left no trace. On the whole, these Monthly Reviewers worked hard, and with proper spirit and deftness. They had a proud sense of the importance of their craft, they laid down the law with great gravity, and from critical benches shook their awful wigs on offenders. How it all looks *now*. "Let us indulge ourselves with another extract,"

quoth one, "and contemplate once more the tear of grief before we are called upon to witness the tear of rapture." *Both* tears dried up long ago—like those that may have sparkled on a Pharaoh's cheek. Hear this other, stern as Rhadamanthus. Behold Duty steeling itself against human weakness! "It grieves us to wound a young man's feelings: but our judgment must not be biased by any plea whatsoever. Why will men apply for our opinion when they know that we cannot be silent, and that we will not lie?" Listen to this prophet in Israel, one who has not bent the knee to Baal, and say if there be not a plaintive touch of pathos in him:—"Fine words do not make fine poems. Scarcely a month passes in which we are not obliged to issue this decree. But in these days of universal heresy our decrees are no more respected than the bulls of the Bishop of Rome." Oh that men would hear, that they would incline their hearts to wisdom! One peculiarity I have noticed—the advertisement sheets which accompanied the numbers are bound up with them, and form an integral portion of the volumes. And just as the tobacco-less man whom we met at the entrance to Glen Sligachan smoked the paper in which his roll of pigtail had been wrapped, so when I had finished the criticisms I attacked the advertisements, and found them

much the more amusing reading. Might not the magazine-buyer of to-day follow the example of the unknown Islesman? Depend upon it, to the reader of the next century the advertising sheets will be more interesting than the poetry, or the essays, or the stories. The two volumes were a godsend; but at last I began to weary of the old literary churchyard in which the poet and his critic sleep in the same oblivion. When I closed the books, and placed them on their shelves, the rain peppered the walls as pertinaciously as when I took them down.

Next day it rained still. It was impossible to go out; the volumes of the *Monthly Review* were sucked oranges, and could yield no further amusement or interest. What was to be done? I took refuge with the Muse. Certain notions had got into my brain,—certain stories had taken possession of my memory,—and these I resolved to versify and finally to dispose of. Here are "Poems Written in a Skye Bothy." The competent critic will see at a glance that they are the vilest plagiarisms,—that as throughout I have called the sky "blue" and the grass "green," I have stolen from every English poet from Chaucer downwards; he will observe also, from occasional uses of "all" and "and," that they are the merest Tennysonian echoes. But

they served their purpose,—they killed for me the languor of the rainy days, which is more than they are likely to do for the critic. Here they are:—

THE WELL.

THE well gleams by a mountain road
Where travellers never come and go
From city proud, or poor abode
That frets the dusky plain below.
All silent as the mouldering lute
That in a ruin long hath lain;
All empty as a dead man's brain—
The path untrod by human foot,
That, thread-like, far away doth run
To savage peaks, whose central spire
Bids farewell to the setting sun,
Good-morrow to the morning's fire.

The country stretches out beneath
In gloom of wood and gray of heath;
The carriers' carts with mighty loads
Black dot the long white country roads;
The stationary stain of smoke
Is crown'd by spire and castle rock;
A silent line of vapoury white,
The train creeps on from shade to light;
The river journeys to the main
Throughout a vast and endless plain,
Far-shadow'd by the labouring breast
Of thunder leaning o'er the west.

A rough uneven waste of gray,
The landscape stretches day by day;
But strange the sight when evening sails
Athwart the mountains and the vales;
Furnace and forge, by daylight tame,

Upïift their restless towers of flame,
And cast a broad and angry glow
Upon the rain-cloud hanging low ;
As dark and darker grows the hour,
More wild their colour, vast their power,
Till by the glare in shepherd's shed,
The mother sings her babe a-bed :
From town to town the pedlar wades
Through far-flung crimson lights and shades.

As softly fall the autumn nights
The city blossoms into lights ;
Now here, now there, a sudden spark
Sputters the twilight's light-in-dark ;
Afar a glimmering crescent shakes ;
The gloom across the valley breaks
In glow-worms ; swiftly, strangely fair,
A bridge of lamps leaps through the air,
And hangs in night ; and sudden shines
The long street's splendour-fretted lines.
Intense and bright that fiery bloom
Upon the bosom of the gloom ;
At length the starry clusters fail,
Afar the lustrous crescents pale,
Till all the wondrous pageant dies
In gray light of damp-dawning skies.

High stands that lonely mountain ground
Above each babbling human sound ;
Yet from its place afar it sees
Night scared by angry furnaces ;
The lighting up of city proud,
The brightness o'er it in the cloud.
The foolish people never seek
Wise counsel from that silent peak,
Though from its height it looks abroad
All-seeing as the eye of God,
Haunting the peasant on the down,
The workman in the busy town ;

Though from the closely-curtain'd dawn
The day is by the mountain drawn—
Whether the slant lines of the rain
Fill high the brook and shake the pane;
Or noonday reapers, wearied, halt
On sheaves beneath a blinding vault,
Unshaded by a vapour's fold—
Though from that mountain summit old
The cloudy thunder breaks and rolls,
Through deep reverberating souls;
Though from it comes the angry light,
Whose forky shiver scars the sight,
And rends the shrine from floor to dome,
And leaves the gods without a home.

And ever in that under-world,
Round which the weary clouds are furl'd,
The cry of one that buys and sells,
The laughter of the bridal bells
Clear-breaking from cathedral towers;
The pedlar whistling o'er the moors;
The sun-burnt reapers, merry corps,
With stooks behind and grain before;
The huntsman cheering on his hounds,
Build up one sound of many sounds.
As instruments of diverse tone,
The organ's temple-shaking groan,
Proud trumpet, cymbal's piercing cry,
Build one consummate harmony:
As smoke that drowns the city's spires,
Is fed by twice a million fires;
As midnight draws her complex grief
From sob and wail of bough and leaf:
And on those favourable days
When earth is free from mist and haze,
And heaven is silent as an ear
Down-leaning, loving words to hear,
Stray echoes of the world are blown
Around those pinnacles of stone—

The saddest sound beneath the sun,
Earth's thousand voices blent in one.

And purely gleams the crystal well
Amid the silence terrible ;
On heaven its eye is ever wide,
At morning and at eventide ;
And as a lover in the sight
And favour of his maiden bright,
Bends till his face he proudly spies
In the clear depths of upturn'd eyes—
The mighty heaven above it bow'd,
Looks down and sees its crumbling cloud ,
Its round of summer blue immense,
Drawn in a yard's circumference,
And lingers o'er the image there,
Than its once self more purely fair.

Whence come the waters, garner'd up
So purely in that rocky cup ?
They come from regions high and far,
Where blows the wind, and shines the star.
The silent dews that Heaven distils
At midnight on the lonely hills ;
The shower that plain and mountain dims,
On which the dazzling rainbow swims :
The torrents from the thunder gloom,
Let loose as by the crack of doom,
The whirling waterspout that cracks
Into a scourge of cataracts,
Are swallow'd by the thirsty ground,
And day and night without a sound,
Through banks of marl, and belts of ores,
They filter through a million pores,
Losing each foul and turbid stain :
So fed by many a trickling vein,
The well, through silent days and years,
Fills softly, like an eye with tear.

AUTUMN.

HAPPY Tourist, freed from London.
The planets' murmur in the *Times!*
Seated here with task work undone,
I must list the city chimes
A fortnight longer. As I gaze
On Pentland's back, where noon-day piles his
Mists and vapours: old St Giles's
Coronet in sultry haze:
A hoary ridge of ancient town
Smoke-wreathed, picturesque, and still;
Cirque of crag and templed hill,
And Arthur's lion couching down
In watch, as if the news of Flodden
Stirr'd him yet—my fancy flies
To level wastes and moors untrodden
Purpling 'neath the low-hung skies.
I see the burden'd orchards, mute and mellow:
I see the sheaves; while, girt by reaper trains,
And blurr'd by breaths of horses, through a yellow
September moonlight, roll the swaggering wanes.

While in this delicious weather
The apple ripens row on row,
I see the footsteps of the heather
Purpling ledges: to and fro
In the wind the restless swallows
Turn and twitter; on the crag
The ash, with all her scarlet berries,
Dances o'er a burn that hurries
Foamily from jag to jag:
Now it babbles over shallows
Where great scales of sunlight flicker;
Narrow'd 'gainst the bank it quicker
Runs in many a rippled ridge;
Anon in purple pools and hollows

It slumbers: and beyond the bridge,
On which a troop of savage children clamber,
A sudden ray comes out
And scuds a startled trout
O'er golden stones, through chasms brilliant amber.
To-day one half remembers
With a sigh,
In the yellow-moon'd Septembers
Long gone by,
Many a solitary stroll
With an over-flowing soul
When the moonbeam, falling white
On the wheat fields, was delight;
When the whisper of the river
Was a thing to list for ever;
When the call of lonely bird
Deeper than all music stirr'd;
When the restless spirit shook
O'er some prophesying book,
In whose pages dwelt the hum
Of a life that was to come;
When I, in a young man's fashion,
Long'd for some excess of passion—
Melancholy, glory, pleasure,
Heap'd up to a lover's measure;
For some unknown experience
To unlock this mortal fence,
And let the coop'd-up spirit range
A world of wonder, sweet and strange:
And thought, O joy all joys above!
Experience would be faced like Love.
When I dream'd that youth would be
Blossom'd like an apple-tree,
The fancy in extremest age
Would dwell within the spirit sage,
Like the wall-flower on the ruin,
With its smile at Time's undoing,
Like the wall-flower on the ruin,

The brighter from the wreck it grew in
Ah, how dearly one remembers
Memory-embalm'd Septembers!
But I start, as well I may,
I have wasted half a day.
The west is red above the sun,
And my task work unbegun.

Nature will not hold a truce
With a beauty without use:
Spring, though blithe and debonair,
Ripens plum and ripens pear.

O mellow, mellow orchard bough!
O yellow, yellow wheaten plain!
Soon will reaper wipe his brow,
Gleaner glean her latest grain,
October, like a gipsy bold,
Pick the berries in the lane,
And November, woodman old,
With fagots gather'd 'gainst the cold,
Trudge through wind and rain.

WARDIE—SPRING-TIME.

In the exuberance of hope and life,
When one is play'd on like an instrument
By passion, and plain faces are divine;
When one holds tenure in the evening star,
We love the pensiveness of autumn air,
The songless fields, brown stubbles, hectic woods,
For as a prince may in his splendour sigh,
Because the splendours are his common wear,
Youth pines within the sameness of delight:
And the all-trying spirit, uncontent
With aught that can be fully known, beguiles

Itself with melancholy images,
Sits down at gloomy banquets, broods o'er graves,
Tries unknown sorrow's edge as curiously
(And not without a strange prophetic thrill)
As one might try a sword's, and makes itself
The Epicurus of fantastic griefs.

But when the blood chills and the years go by,
As we resemble autumn more, the more
We love the resurrection time of spring.
And spring is now around me. Snowdrops came;
Crocuses gleam'd along the garden walk
Like footlights on the stage. But these are gone.
And now before my door the poplar burns,
A torch enkindled at an emerald fire.
The flowering currant is a rosy cloud;
One daffodil is hooded, one full blown:
The sunny mavis from the tree top sings;
Within the flying sunlights twinkling troops
Of chaffinches jerk here and there; beneath
The shrubbery the blackbird runs, then flits,
With chattering cry: demure at ploughman's heel,
Within the red-drawn furrow, stalks the rook,
A pale metallic glister on his back;
And, like a singing arrow upwards shot
Far out of sight, the lark is in the blue.

This morning, when the stormy front of March
Is mask'd with June, and has as sweet a breath,
And sparrows fly with straws, and in the elms
Rooks flap and caw, then stream off to the fields,
And thence returning, flap and caw again,
I gaze in idle pleasantness of mood,
Far down upon the harbour and the sea—
The smoking steamer half-way 'cross the Firth
Shrunk to a beetle's size, the dark-brown sails
Of scatter'd fishing-boats, and still beyond,
Seen dimly through a veil of tender haze,

The coast of Fife endorsed with ancient towns,—
As quaint and strange to-day as when the queen,
In whose smile lay the headsman's glittering axe,
Beheld them from her tower of Holyrood,
And sigh'd for fruitful France, and turning, cower'd
From the lank shadow, Darnley, at her side.

Behind, the wondrous city stretches dim
With castle, spire, and column, from the line
Of wavy Pentland, to the pillar'd range
That keeps in memory the men who fell
In the great war that closed at Waterloo.
Whitely the pillars gleam against the hill,
While the light flashes by. The wondrous town,
That keeps not summer, when the summer comes,
Without her gates, but takes it to her heart!
The mighty shadow of the castle falls
At noon athwart deep gardens, roses blow
And fade in hearing of the chariot-wheel.
High-lifted capital that look'st abroad,
With the great lion couchant at thy side,
O'er fertile plains emboss'd with woods and towns;
O'er silent Leith's smoke-huddled spires and masts;
O'er unlink'd Forth, slow wandering with her isles
To ocean's azure, spreading faint and wide,
O'er which the morning comes—if but thy spires
Were dipp'd in deeper sunshine, tenderer shade,
Through bluer heavens rolled a brighter sun,
The traveller would call thee peer of Rome,
Or Florence, white-tower'd, on the mountain side.

Burns trod thy pavements with his ploughman's stoop
And genius-flaming eyes. Scott dwelt in thee,
The homeliest-featured of the demigods;
Apollo, with a deep Northumbrian burr,
And Jeffrey with his sharp-cut critic face,
And Lockhart with his antique Roman taste,
And Wilson, reckless of his splendid gifts,

As hill-side of its streams in thunder rain;
And Chalmers, with those heavy slumberous lids,
Veiling a prophet's eyes; and Miller, too,
Primeval granite amongst smooth-rubb'd men;
Of all the noble race but one remains,
Aytoun—with silver bugle at his side,
That echo'd through the gorges of romance—
Pity that 'tis so seldom at his lip!

This place is fair; but when the year hath grown
From snow-drops to the dusk auricula,
And spaces throng'd to-day with naked boughs,
Are banks of murmuring foliage, chestnut-flower'd,
Far fairer. Then, as in the summer past,
From the red village underneath the hill,
When the long daylight closes, in the hush
Comes the pathetic mirth of children's games:
Or clear sweet trebles, as two lines of girls
Advance and then retire, singing the while
Snatches of some old ballad sore decay'd,
And crumbling to no-meaning through sheer age—
A childish drama watch'd by labouring men,
In shirt-sleeves, smoking at the open doors,
With a strange sweetness stirring at their hearts.
Then when the darkness comes and voices cease,
The long-ranged brick-kilns glow, the far-stretch'd pier
Breaks out, like Aaron's rod, in buds of fire;
And with a startling suddenness the light,
That like a glow-worm slumbers on Inchkeith,
Broadens, then to a glow-worm shrinks again.
The sea is dark, but on the darker coast
Beyond, the ancient towns Queen Mary knew
Glitter, like swarms of fire-flies, here and there.
Come, Summer, from the south, and grow apace
From flower to flower, until thy prime is reach'd,
Then linger, linger, linger o'er the rose!

DANSCIACH.

Upon a ruin by the desert shore,
I sat one autumn day of utter peace,
Watching a lustrous stream of vapour pour
O'er Blaavin, fleece on fleece.

The blue frith stretch'd in front without a sail,
Huge boulders on the shore lay wreck'd and strown;
Behind arose, storm-bleach'd and lichen-pale,
Buttress and wall of stone.

And sitting on the Norseman's ruin'd stair,
While through the shining vapours downward roll'd,
A ledge of Blaavin gleam'd out, wet and bare,
I heard this story told:—

"All night the witch sang, and the castle grew
Up from the rock, with tower and turret crown'd:
All night she sang—when fell the morning dew
'Twas finish'd round and round.

"From out the morning ambers opening wide,
A galley, many-oar'd and dragon-beak'd,
Came, bearing bridegroom Sigurd, happy-eyed,
Bride Hilda, brilliant-cheek'd.

"And in the witch's castle, magic-built,
They dwelt in bridal sweetness many a year,
Till tumult rose in Norway, blood was spilt,—
Then Sigurd grasp'd his spear.

"The Islesmen murmur'd 'gainst the Norseman's tax;
Jarl Sigurd led them—many a skull he cleft,
Ere, 'neath his fallen standard, battle-axe
Blood-painted to the heft,

" He lay at sunset propp'd up by his slain,
(Leader and kerne that he had smitten down,)
Stark, rigid; in his haut face scorn and pain,
Fix'd in eternal frown.

" When they brought home the bloody man, the sight
Blanch'd Hilda to her hair of bounteous gold;
That day she was a happy bride, that night
A woman gray and old.

" The dead man left his eyes beneath the brows
Of Hilda, in a child whose loosened speech
Prattled of sword, spear, buckler, idle rows
Of galleys on the beach.

" And Hilda sang him songs of northern lands,
Weird songs of foamy wraith and roaming sail,
Songs of gaunt wolves, clear icebergs, magic brands,
Enchanted shirts of mail.

" The years built up a giant broad and grave,
With florid locks, and eyes that look'd men through;
A passion for the long lift of the wave
From roaming sires he drew.

" Amongst the craggy islands did he rove,
And, like an eagle, took and rent his prey;
Oft, deep with battle-spoil, his galleys clove
Homeward their joyous way.

" He towering, full-arm'd, in the van, with spear
Outstretch'd, and hair blown backward like a flame:
While to the setting sun his oarsmen rear
The glory of his name.

" Once, when the sea his battle galleys cross'd,
His mother, sickening, turn'd from summer light,
And faced death as the Norse land, clench'd with frost,
Faces the polar night.

" At length his masts came raking through the mist :
He pour'd upon the beach his wild-eyed bands :
The fierce, fond, dying woman turn'd and kiss'd
His orphan-making hands,

" And lean'd her head against his mighty breast
In pure content, well knowing so to live
One single hour was all that death could wrest
Away, or life could give ;

" And murmur'd as her dying fingers took
Farewell of cheek and brow, then fondly drown'd
Themselves in tawny hair—'I cannot brook
To sleep here under ground.

" My women through my chambers weep and wail :
I would not waste one tear-drop though I could :
When they brought home that lordly length of mail
With bold blood stain'd and glued,

" I wept out all my tears. Amongst my kind
I cannot sleep ; so upon Marsco's head,
Right in the pathway of the Norway wind,
See thou and make my bed !

" The north wind blowing on that lonely place
Will comfort me. Kiss me, my Torquil ! I
Feel the big hot tears plashing on my face.
How easy 'tis to die !'

" The farewell-taking arms around him set
Clung closer ; and a feeble mouth was raised,
Seeking for his in darkness—ere they met
The eyeballs fix'd and glazed.

" Dearer that kiss, by pain and death forestall'd,
Than ever yet touch'd lip ! Beside the bed
The Norseman knelt till sunset, then he call'd
The dressers of the dead.

" Who, looking on her face, were daunted more
Than when she, living, flash'd indignant fires ;
For in the gathering gloom the features wore
A look that was her sire's.

" And upward to a sea-o'erstaring peak
With lamentation was the Princess borne,
And, looking northward, left with evening meek,
And fiery-shooting morn."

In this wise ran the story full of breaks :
And brooding o'er that subtle sense of death
That sighs through all our happy days, that shakes
All raptures of our breath,

Methought I saw the ancient woman bow'd
By sorrow in her witch-built home—and still
The radiant billows of autumnal cloud
Flow'd on the monstrous hill.

EDENBAIN.

YOUNG Edenbain canter'd
Across to Kilmuir,
The road was rough,
But his horse was sure.
The mighty sun taking
His splendid sea-bath,
Made golden the greenness
Of valley and strath.

He cared not for sunset,
For gold rock nor isle ;

O'er his dark face their flitted
A secretive smile.
His cousin, the great
London merchant was dead,
Edenbain was his heir—
"I 'll buy lands," he said.

"Men fear death. How should I?
We live and we learn—
I' faith, death has done me
The handsomest turn.
Young, good-looking, thirty—
(Hie on, Roger, hie!)
I'll taste every pleasure
That money can buy.

"Duntulm and Dunsciach
May laugh at my birth.
Let them laugh! Father Adam
Was made out of earth.
What are worm-eaten castles
And ancestry old,
'Gainst a modern purse stuff'd
With omnipotent gold?"

He saw himself riding
To kirk and to fair,
Hats lifting, arms nudging,
"That 's Edenbain there!"
He thought of each girl
He had known in his life,
Nor could fix on which sweetness
To pluck for a wife.

Home Edenbain canter'd,
With pride in his heart,
When sudden he pull'd up
His horse with a start.

The road, which was bare
As the desert before,
Was cover'd with people
A hundred and more.

'Twas a black creeping funeral;
And Edenbain drew
His horse to the side of
The roadway. He knew
In the cart rolling past
That a coffin was laid—
But whose? the harsh outline
Was hid by a plaid.

The cart pass'd. The mourners
Came marching behind:
In front his own father,
Greyheaded, stone-blind;
And far-removed cousins,
His own stock and race,
Came after in silence,
A cloud on each face.

Together walk'd Mugstot
And fiery-soul'd Ord,
Whom six days before
He had left at his board.
Behind came the red-bearded
Sons of Tormore
With whom he was drunk
Scarce a fortnight before.

"Who is dead? Don't they know me?"
Thought young Edenbain,
With a weird terror gathering
In heart and in brain.
In a moment the black
Crawling funeral was gone,

And he sat on his horse
On the roadway alone.

"'Tis the second sight," cried he;
"'Tis strange that I miss
Myself 'mong the mourners!
Whose burial is this?
"My God! 'tis my own!"
And the blood left his heart,
As he thought of the dead man
That lay in the cart.

The sun, ere he sank in
His splendid sea-bath,
Saw Edenbain spur through
The golden-green strath.
Past a twilighted shepherd
At watch rush'd a horse,
With Edenbain dragged
At the stirrup a corse.

PEEBLES.

I LAY in my bedroom at Peebles
With my window curtains drawn,
While there stole over hill of pasture and pine
The unresplendent dawn.

And through the deep silence I listen'd,
With a pleased, half-waking heed,
To the sound which ran through the ancient town—
The shallow-brawling Tweed.

For to me 'twas a realisation
Of dream; and I felt like one

Who first sees the Alps, or the Pyramids,
World-old, in the setting sun;

First, crossing the purple Campagna,
Beholds the wonderful dome
Which a thought of Michael Angelo hung
In the golden air of Rome.

And all through the summer morning
I felt it a joy indeed
To whisper again and again to myself,
This is the voice of the Tweed.

Of Dryburgh, Melrose, and Neidpath,
Norham Castle brown and bare,
The merry sun shining on merry Carlisle,
And the Bush aboon Traquair,

I had dream'd: but most of the river,
That, glittering mile on mile,
Flow'd through my imagination,
As through Egypt flows the Nile.

Was it absolute truth, or a dreaming
That the wakeful day disowns,
That I heard something more in the stream, as it ran,
Than water breaking on stones?

Now the hoofs of a flying mosstrooper,
Now a bloodhound's bay, half caught,
The sudden blast of a hunting horn,
The burr of Walter Scott?

Who knows? But of this I am certain,
That but for the ballads and wails
That make passionate dead things, stocks and stones,
Make piteous woods and dales,

The Tweed were as poor as the Amazon,
That, for all the years it has roll'd,
Can tell but how fair was the morning red,
How sweet the evening gold.

JUBILATION OF SERGEANT M'TURK ON WITNESSING THE HIGHLAND GAMES.

INVERNESS, 1864.

HURRAH for the Highland glory!
Hurrah for the Highland fame!
For the battles of the great Montrose,
And the pass of the gallant Græme!
Hurrah for the knights and nobles
That rose up in their place,
And perill'd fame and fortune
For Charlie's bonny face!

Awa frae green Lochaber
He led his slender clans:
The rising skirl o' our bagpipes fley'd
Sir John at Prestonpans.
Ance mair we gather'd glory
In Falkirk's battle stoure,
Ere the tartans lay red-soak'd in bluid
On black Drumossie Moor.

An' when the weary time was owre,
When the head fell frae the neck,
Wolfe heard the cry, "They run, they run!"
On the heights aboon Quebec.

At Ticonderoga's fortress
We fell on sword and targe;
Hurt Moore was lifted up to see
"His Forty-second" charge.

An' aye the pipe was loudest,
An' aye the tartans flew,
The first frae bluidy Maida
To bluidier Waterloo.
We have sail'd owre many a sea, my lads,
We have fought 'neath many a sky,
And it's where the fight has hottest raged
That the tartans thickest lie.

We landed, lads, in India,
When in our bosom's core
One bitter memory burn'd like hell—
The shambles at Cawnpore.
Weel ye mind our march through the furnace-heats,
Weel ye mind the heaps of slain,
As we follow'd through his score of fights
Brave 'Havèlock the Dane."

Hurrah for the Highland glory!
Hurrah for the Highland names!
God bless you, noble gentlemen!
God love you, bonny dames!
And sneer not at the brawny limbs,
And the strength of our Highland men—
When the bayonets next are levell'd,
They may all be needed then.

These verses I had no sooner copied out in my best hand than, looking up, I found that the rain had ceased from sheer fatigue, and that great white vapours were rising up from the damp valleys.

Here was release at last—the beleaguering army had raised the siege; and, better than all, pleasant as the sound of Blucher's cannon on the evening of Waterloo, I heard the sound of wheels on the boggy ground: and just when the stanched rain-clouds were burning into a sullen red at sunset, I had the M'Ians, father and son, in my bothy, and pleasant human intercourse. They came to carry me off with them.

I am to stay with Mr M'Ian to-night. A wedding has taken place up among the hills, and the whole party have been asked to make a night of it. The mighty kitchen has been cleared for the occasion; torches are stuck up, ready to be lighted; and I already hear the first mutterings of the bagpipes' storm of sound. The old gentleman wears a look of brightness and hilarity, and vows that he will lead off the first reel with the bride. Everything is prepared; and even now the bridal party are coming down the steep hill-road. I must go out to meet them. To-morrow I return to my bothy to watch; for the weather has become fine now, the sunny mists congregating on the crests of Blaavin—Blaavin on which the level heaven seems to lean.

THE LANDLORD'S WALK.

WALKING into the interior of Skye is like walking into antiquity; the present is behind you, your face is turned toward Ossian. In the quiet silent wilderness you think of London, Liverpool, Edinburgh, or whatever great city it may be given you to live and work in, as of something of which you were cognisant in a former existence. Not only do you breathe the air of antiquity; but everything about you is a veritable antique. The hut by the road-side, thatched with turfs, smoke issuing from the roof, is a specimen of one of the oldest styles of architecture in the world. The crooked spade with which the crofter turns over the sour ground carries you away into fable. You remove a pile of stones on the moor, and you come to a flagged chamber in which there is a handful of human bones—*whose*, no one can tell. Duntulm and Dunsciach moulder on their crags, but the song the passing milkmaid sings is older than they. You come upon old swords that were once bright and athirst for blood; old brooches that

once clasped plaids; old churchyards with carvings of unknown knights on the tombs; and old men who seem to have inherited the years of the eagle or the crow. These human antiques are, in their way, more interesting than any other: they are the most precious objects of *virtu* of which the island can boast. And at times, if you can keep ear and eye open, you stumble on forms of life, relations of master and servant, which are as old as the castle on the crag or the cairn of the chief on the moor. Cash payment is *not* the "sole nexus between man and man." In these remote regions your servants' affection for you is hereditary as their family name or their family ornaments; your foster-brother would die willingly for you; and if your nurse had the writing of your epitaph, you would be the bravest, strongest, handsomest man that ever walked in shoe leather or out of it.

The house of my friend Mr M'Ian is set down on the shore of one of the great Lochs that intersect the island; and as it was built in smuggling times, its windows look straight down the Loch towards the open sea. Consequently at night, when lighted up, it served all the purposes of a lighthouse: and the candle in the porch window, I am told, has often been anxiously watched by the

CUCHULLIN HILLS, SKYE

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rough crew engaged in running a cargo of claret or brandy from Bordeaux. Right opposite, on the other side of the Loch, is the great rugged fringe of the Cuchullin hills; and lying on the dry summer grass you can see it, under the influence of light and shade, change almost as the expression of a human face changes. Behind the house the ground is rough and broken, every hollow filled, every knoll plumaged with birches, and between the leafy islands, during the day, rabbits scud continually, and in the evening they sit in the glades and wash their innocent faces. A mile or two back from the house a glen opens into soft green meadows, through which a stream flows; and on these meadows Mr M'Ian, when the weather permits, cuts and secures his hay. The stream is quiet enough usually, but after a heavy day's rain, or when a waterspout has burst up among the hills, it comes down with a vengeance, carrying everything before it. On such occasions its roar may be heard a mile away. About a pistol-shot from the house the river is crossed by a plank bridge, and in fine weather it is a great pleasure to sit down there and look about one. The stream flows sluggishly over rocks, in the deep places of a purple or port-wine colour, and lo! behind you, through the arch, slips a sunbeam, and just beneath

the eye there gleams a sudden chasm of brilliant amber. The sea is at ebb, and the shore is covered with stones and dark masses of sea-weed; and the rocks a hundred yards off—in their hollows they hold pools of clear sea-water in which you can find curious and delicately-coloured ocean blooms—are covered with orange lichens, which contrast charmingly with the masses of tawny dulse and the stone-littered shore on the one side, and the keen blue of the sea on the other. Beyond the blue of the sea the great hills rise, with a radiant vapour flowing over their crests. Immediately to the left a spur of high ground runs out to the sea edge,—the flat top smooth and green as a billiard table, the sheep feeding on it white as billiard balls,—and at the foot of this spur of rock a number of huts are collected. They are half lost in an azure veil of smoke, you smell the peculiar odour of peat reek, you see the nets lying out on the grass to dry, you hear the voices of children. Immediately above, and behind the huts and the spur of high ground, the hill falls back, the whole breast of it shaggy with birch-wood; and just at the top you see a clearing and a streak of white stony road, leading into some other region as solitary and beautiful as the one in which you at present are. And while you sit on

the bridge in a state of half-sleepy contentment —a bee nuzzling in a bell-shaped flower within reach of your stick, the sea-gulls dancing silent quadrilles overhead, the white lightning flash of a rabbit from copse to copse twenty yards off— you hear a sharp whistle, then a shout, and looking round there is M'Ian himself standing on a height, his figure clear against the sky: and immediately the men tinkering the boat on the shore drop work and stand and stare, and out of the smoke that wraps the cottages rushes bonnetless, Lachlan Dhu, or Donald Roy, scattering a brood of poultry in his haste, and marvelling much what has moved his master to such unwonted exertion.

My friend's white house is a solitary one, no other dwelling of the same kind being within eight miles of it. In winter, wind and rain beat it with a special spite; and the thunder of the sea creeps into your sleeping ears, and your dreams are of breakers and reefs, and ships going to pieces, and the cries of drowning men. In summer, it basks as contentedly on its green knoll; green grass, with the daisy wagging its head in the soft wind, runs up to the very door of the porch. But although solitary enough—so solitary, that if you are asked to dine with your nearest neighbour you must mount and ride—there are

many more huts about than those we have seen nestling on the shore beneath the smooth green plateau on which sheep are feeding. If you walk along to the west,—and a rough path it is, for your course is over broken boulders,—you come on a little bay with an eagle's nest of a castle perched on a cliff, and there you will find a school-house and a half-a-dozen huts, the blue smoke steaming out of the crannies in the walls and roofs. Dark pyramids of peat are standing about, sheep and cows are feeding on the bits of pasture, gulls are weaving their eternal dances above, and during the day the school-room is murmuring like a bee-hive—only a much less pleasant task than the making of honey is going on within. Behind the house to the east, hidden by the broken ground and the masses of birch-wood, is another collection of huts; and in one of these lives the most interesting man in the place. He is an old pensioner, who has seen service in different quarters of the world; and frequently have I carried him a string of pigtail, and shared his glass of usquebaugh, and heard him, as he sat on a stone in the sunshine, tell tales of barrack life in Jamaica; of woody wildernesses filled with gorgeous undergrowth, of parasites that climbed like fluttering tongues of fire, and of the noisy towns of monkeys and par-

rots in the upper branches. I have heard him also severely critical on the different varieties of rum. Of every fiery compound he had a catholic appreciation, but rum was his special favourite—being to him what a Greek text was to Porson, or an old master to Sir George Beaumont. So that you see, although Mr M'Ian's house was in a sense solitary, yet it was not altogether bereaved of the sight and sense of human habitations. On the farm there were existing perhaps, women and children included, some sixty souls; and to these the relation of the master was peculiar, and perhaps without a parallel in the island.

When, nearly half-a-century ago, Mr M'Ian left the army and became tacksman, he found cotters on his farm, and thought their presence as much a matter of course as that limpets should be found upon his rocks. They had their huts, for which they paid no rent; they had their patches of corn and potato ground, for which they paid no rent. There they had always been, and there, so far as Mr M'Ian was concerned, they would remain. He had his own code of generous old-fashioned ethics, to which he steadily adhered; and the man who was hard on the poor, who would dream of driving them from the places in which they were born, seemed to him to break the entire round of the Com-

mandments. Consequently the huts still smoked on the hem of the shore and among the clumps of birch-wood. The children who played on the green when he first became tacksman grew up in process of time, and married; and on these occasions he not only sent them something on which to make merry withal, but he gave them—what they valued more—his personal presence; and he made it a point of honour, when the ceremony was over, to dance the first reel with the bride. When old men or children were sick, cordials and medicines were sent from the house; when old man or child died, Mr M'Ian never failed to attend the funeral. He was a Justice of the Peace; and when disputes arose amongst his own cotters, or amongst the cotters of others—when, for instance, Katy M'Lure accused Effie M'Kean of stealing potatoes; when Red Donald raged against Black Peter on some matter relating to the sale of a dozen lambs; when Mary, in her anger at the loss of her sweetheart, accused Betty (to whom said sweetheart had transferred his allegiance) of the most flagrant breaches of morality—the contending parties were sure to come before my friend; and many a rude court of justice I have seen him hold at the door of his porch. Arguments were heard *pro* and *con*, witnesses were examined, evidence was duly sifted

and weighed, judgment was made, and the case dismissed; and I believe these decisions gave in the long run as much satisfaction as those delivered in Westminster or the Edinburgh Parliament-House. Occasionally, too, a single girl or shepherd, with whose character liberties were being taken, would be found standing at the porch-door anxious to make oath that they were innocent of the guilt or the impropriety laid to their charge. Mr M'Ian would come out and hear the story, make the party assert his or her innocence on oath, and deliver a written certificate to the effect that in his presence, on such and such a day, so and so had sworn that certain charges were unfounded, false, and malicious. Armed with this certificate, the aspersed girl or shepherd would depart in triumph. He or she had passed through the ordeal by oath, and nothing could touch them farther.

Mr M'Ian paid rent for the entire farm; but to him the cotters paid no rent, either for their huts or for their patches of corn and potato ground. But the cotters were by no means merely pensioners — taking, and giving nothing in return. The most active of the girls were maids of various degree in Mr M'Ian's house; the cleverest and strongest of the lads acted as shepherds, &c.; and these of course received wages. The grown men

amongst the cotters were generally at work in the south, or engaged in fishing expeditions, during summer; so that the permanent residents on the farm were chiefly composed of old men, women, and children. When required, Mr M'Ian demands the services of these people just as he would the services of his household servants, and they comply quite as readily. If the crows are to be kept out of the corn, or the cows out of the turnip-field, an urchin is remorselessly reft away from his games and companions. If a boat is out of repair, old Dugald is deputed to the job, and when his task is completed, he is rewarded with ten minutes' chat and a glass of spirits up at the house. When fine weather comes, every man, woman, and child is ordered to the hay-field, and Mr M'Ian potters amongst them the whole day, and takes care that no one shirks his duty. When his corn or barley is ripe the cotters cut it, and when the harvest operations are completed, he gives the entire cotter population a dance and harvest-home. But between Mr M'Ian and his cotters no money passes; by a tacit understanding he is to give them house, corn-ground, potato-ground, and they are to remunerate him with labour.

Mr M'Ian, it will be seen, is a conservative, and hates change; and the social system by which he

is surrounded wears an ancient and patriarchal aspect to a modern eye. It is a remnant of the system of clanship. The relation of cotter and tacksman, which I have described, is a bit of antiquity quite as interesting as the old castle on the crag—nay, *more* interesting, because we value the old castle mainly in virtue of its representing an ancient form of life, and here is yet lingering a fragment of the ancient form of life itself. You dig up an ancient tool or weapon in a moor, and place it carefully in a museum: here, as it were, is the ancient tool or weapon in actual use. No doubt Mr M'Ian's system has grave defects: it perpetuates comparative wretchedness on the part of the cotters, it paralyses personal exertion, it begets an ignoble contentment; but on the other hand it sweetens sordid conditions, so far as they can be sweetened, by kindliness and good services. If Mr M'Ian's system is bad, he makes the best of it, and draws as much comfort and satisfaction out of it, both for himself and for others, as is perhaps possible.

Mr M'Ian's speech was as old-fashioned as he was himself; ancient matters turned up on his tongue just as ancient matters turned up on his farm. You found an old grave or an old implement on the one, you found an old proverb or an old scrap of a Gaelic poem on the other. After

staying with him some ten days, I intimated my intention of paying a visit to my friend the Landlord—with whom Fellowes was then staying —who lived some forty miles off in the north-western portion of the island. The old gentleman was opposed to rapid decisions and movements, and asked me to remain with him yet another week. When he found I was resolute he glanced at the weather-gleam, and the troops of mists gathering on Cuchullin, muttering as he did so, "'Make ready my galley,' said the king, 'I shall sail for Norway on Wednesday.' 'Will you,' said the wind, who, flying about, had overheard what was said, 'you had better ask my leave first.'"

Between the Landlord and M'Ian there were many likenesses and divergences. Both were Skye-men by birth, both had the strongest love for their native island, both had the management of human beings, both had shrewd heads, and hearts of the kindest texture. But at this point the likenesses ended, and the divergences began. Mr M'Ian had never been out of the three kingdoms. The Landlord had spent the best part of his life in India, was more familiar with huts of ryots, topes of palms, tanks in which the indigo plant was steeping, than with the houses of Skye cotters and the processes of sheep-farming. He knew the

streets of Benares or Delhi better than he knew the streets of London; and, when he first came home, Hindostanee would occasionally jostle Gaelic on his tongue. The Landlord too, was rich, would have been considered a rich man even in the southern cities; he was owner of many a mile of moorland, and the tides of more than one far-winding Loch rose and rippled on shores that called him master. In my friend the Landlord there was a sort of contrariety, a sort of mixture or blending of opposite elements which was not without its fascination. He was in some respects a resident in two worlds. He liked motion; he had a magnificent scorn of distance: to him the world seemed comparatively small; and he would start from Skye to India with as much composure as other men would take the night train to London. He paid taxes in India and he paid taxes in Skye. His name was as powerful in the markets of Calcutta as it was at the Muir of Ord. He read the *Hurkaru* and the *Inverness Courier.* He had known the graceful salaam of the East, as he now knew the touched bonnets of his shepherds. And in living with him, in talking with him, one was now reminded of the green western island on which sheep fed, anon of tropic heats, of pearl and gold, of mosque and pinnacle glittering above belts

of palm-trees. In his company you were in imagination travelling backwards and forwards. You made the overland route twenty times a day. Now you heard the bagpipe, now the monotonous beat of the tom-tom and the keen clash of silver cymbals. You were continually passing backwards and forwards, as I have said. You were in the West with your half-glass of bitters in the morning, you were in the East with the curry at dinner. Both Mr M'Ian and the Landlord had the management of human beings, but their methods of management were totally different. Mr M'Ian accepted matters as he found them, and originating nothing, changing nothing, contrived to make life for himself and others as pleasant as possible. The Landlord, when he entered on the direction of his property, exploded every ancient form of usage, actually *ruled* his tenants ; would permit no factor, middle-man, or go-between ; met them face to face, and had it out with them. The consequence was that the poor people were at times sorely bewildered. They received their orders and carried them out, with but little sense of the ultimate purpose of the Landlord—just as the sailor, ignorant of the principles of navigation, pulls ropes and reefs sails and does not discover that he gains much thereby, the same sea-crescent being around him

day by day, but in due time a cloud rises on the horizon, and he is in port at last.

As M'Ian had predicted, I could only move from his house if the weather granted permission; and this permission the weather did not seem disposed to grant. For several days it rained as I had never seen it rain before; a waterspout, too had burst up among the hills, and the stream came down in mighty flood. There was great hubbub at the house. Mr M'Ian's hay, which was built in large stacks in the valley meadows, was in danger, and the fiery cross was sent through the cotters. Up to the hay-fields every available man was despatched with carts and horses, to remove the stacks to some spot where the waters could not reach them; while at the bridge nearer the house women and boys were stationed with long poles, and what rudely-extemporised implements Celtic ingenuity could suggest, to intercept and fish out piles and trusses which the thievish stream was carrying away with it seaward. These piles and trusses would at least serve for the bedding of cattle. For three days the rainy tempest continued; at last, on the fourth, mist and rain rolled up like a vast curtain in heaven, and then again were visible the clumps of birch-wood, and the bright sea and the smoking hills, and far away on the ocean floor Rum and

Canna, without a speck of cloud on them, sleeping in the coloured calmness of early afternoon. This uprising of the elemental curtain was, so far as the suddenness of the effect was concerned, like the uprising of the curtain of the pantomime on the transformation scene—all at once a dingy, sodden world had become a brilliant one, and all the newly-revealed colour and brilliancy promised to be permanent.

Of this happy change in the weather I of course took immediate advantage. About five o'clock in the afternoon my dog-cart was brought to the door; and after a parting cup with Mr M'Ian—who pours a libation both to his arriving and his departing guest—I drove away on my journey to remote Portree, and to the unimagined country that lay beyond Portree, but which I knew held Dunvegan, Duntulm, Macleod's Tables, and Quirang. I drove up the long glen with a pleasant exhilaration of spirit. I felt grateful to the sun, for he had released me from rainy captivity. The drive, too, was pretty; the stream came rolling down in foam, the smell of the wet birch-trees was in the brilliant air, every mountain-top was strangely and yet softly distinct; and looking back, there were the blue Cuchullins looking after me, as if bidding me farewell! At

last I reached the top of the glen, and emerged on a high plateau of moorland, in which were dark inky tarns with big white water-lilies on them; and skirting across the plateau I dipped down on the parliamentary road, which, like a broad white belt, surrounds Skye. Better road to drive on you will not find in the neighbourhood of London itself! and just as I was descending, I could not help pulling up. The whole scene was of the extremest beauty — exquisitely calm, exquisitely coloured. On my left was a little lake with a white margin of water-lilies, a rocky eminence throwing a shadow half-way across it. Down below, on the sea-shore, was the farm of Knock, with white outhouses and pleasant patches of cultivation, the school-house, and the church, while on a low spit of land the old castle of the Macdonalds was mouldering. Still lower down and straight away stretched the sleek blue Sound of Sleat, with not a sail or streak of steamer smoke to break its vast expanse, and with a whole congregation of clouds piled up on the horizon, soon to wear their evening colours. I let the sight slowly creep into my study of imagination, so that I might be able to reproduce it at pleasure; that done, I drove down to Isle Ornsay by pleasant sloping stages of descent, with

green hills on right and left, and along the road-side, like a guard of honour, the purple stalks of the foxglove.

The evening sky was growing red above me when I drove into Isle Oronsay, which consists of perhaps fifteen houses in all. It sits on the margin of a pretty bay, in which the cry of the fisher is continually heard, and into which the *Clansman* going to or coming from the south steams twice or thrice in the week. At a little distance is a lighthouse with a revolving light,—an idle building during the day, but when night comes, awakening to full activity,—sending now a ray to Ardnamurchan, now piercing with a fiery arrow the darkness of Glenelg. In Isle Oronsay is a merchant's shop, in which every conceivable article may be obtained. At Isle Oronsay the post-runner drops a bag, as he hies on to Armadale Castle. At Isle Oronsay I supped with my friend Mr Fraser. From him I learned that the little village had been, like M'Ian's house, fiercely scourged by rains. On the supper-table was a dish of trouts. "Where do you suppose I procured these?" he asked. "In one of your burns, I suppose." "No such thing; I found them in my potato-field." "In your potato-field! How came that about?" "Why, you see the stream, swollen by three days' rain, broke over

a potato-field of mine on the hill-side and carried the potatoes away, and left these plashing in pool and runnel. The Skye streams have a slight touch of honesty in them!" I smiled at the conceit, and expounded to my host the law of compensation which pervades the universe, of which I maintained the trouts on the table were a shining example. Mr Fraser assented; but held that Nature was a poor valuator—that her knowledge of the doctrine of equivalents was slightly defective—that the trouts were well enough, but no reimbursement for the potatoes that were gone.

Next morning I resumed my journey. The road, so long as it skirted the sea-shore, was pretty enough; but the sea-shore it soon left, and entered a waste of brown monotonous moorland. The country round about abounds in grouse, and was the favourite shooting-ground of the late Lord Macdonald. By the road-side his lordship had erected a stable and covered the roof with tin; and so at a distance it flashed as if the Koh-i-noor had been dropped by accident in that dismal region. As I went along, the hills above Broadford began to rise; then I drove down the slope, on which the market was held—the tents all struck, but the stakes yet remaining in the ground—and after passing the six houses, the lime-kiln, the church, and the two

merchants' shops, I pulled up at the inn door, and sent the horse round to the stable to feed and to rest an hour.

After leaving Broadford the traveller drives along the margin of the ribbon of salt water which flows between Skye and the Island of Scalpa. Up this narrow sound the steamer never passes, and it is only navigated by the lighter kinds of sailing craft. Scalpa is a hilly island of some three or four miles in length, by one and a half in breadth, is gray-green in colour, and as treeless as the palm of your hand. It has been the birth-place of many soldiers. After passing Scalpa the road ascends; and you notice as you drive along that during the last hour or so the frequent streams have changed colour. In the southern portion of the island they come down as if the hills ran sherry—here they are pale as shallow sea-water. This difference of hue arises of course from a difference of bed. About Broadford they come down through the mossy moorland, here they run over marble. Of marble the island is full; and it is not impossible that the sculptors of the twentieth century will patronise the quarries of Strath and Kyle rather than the quarries of Carrara. But wealth is needed to lay bare these mineral treasures. The fine qualities of Skye marble will never be obtained

until they are laid open by a golden pick-axe.

Once you have passed Scalpa you approach Lord Macdonald's deer forest. You have turned the flank of the Cuchullins now, and are taking them in rear, and you skirt their bases very closely too. The road is full of wild ascents and descents, and on your left, for a couple of miles or so, you are in continual presence of bouldered hill-side sloping away upward to some invisible peak, overhanging wall of wet black precipice, far-off serrated ridge that cuts the sky like a saw. Occasionally these mountain forms open up and fall back, and you see the sterilest valleys running no man knows whither. Altogether the hills here have a strange weird look. Each is as closely seamed with lines as the face of a man of a hundred, and these myriad reticulations are picked out with a pallid gray-green, as if through some mineral corrosion. Passing along you are strangely impressed with the idea that some vast chemical experiment has been going on for some thousands of years; that the region is nature's laboratory, and that down these wrinkled hill-fronts she had spilt her acids and undreamed-of combinations. You never think of verdure in connexion with that net-work of gray-green, but only of rust, or of some metallic discoloration.

You cannot help fancying that if a sheep fed on one of those hill-sides it would to a certainty be poisoned. Altogether the sight is very grand, very impressive, and very uncomfortable, and it is with the liveliest satisfaction that, tearing down one of the long descents, you turn your back on the mountain monsters, and behold in front the green Island of Raasay, with its imposing modern mansion, basking in sunshine. It is like passing from the world of the gnomes to the world of men.

I have driven across Lord Macdonald's deer forest in sunshine and in rain, and am constrained to confess that, under the latter atmospherical condition, the scenery is the more imposing. Some months ago I drove in the mail-gig from Sligachan to Broadford. There was a high wind, the sun was bright, and consequently a great *carry* and flight of sunny vapours. All at once, too, every half-hour or so, the turbulent brightness of wind and cloud was extinguished by fierce squalls of rain. You could see the coming rain-storm blown out on the wind toward you like a sheet of muslin cloth. On it came racing in its strength and darkness, the long straight watery lines pelting on road and rock, churning in marsh and pool. Over the unhappy mail-gig it rushed, bidding defiance to plaid or waterproof cape, and wetting every one to the

skin. The mail jogged on as best it could through the gloom and the fury, and then the sunshine came again, making to glisten, almost too brightly for the eye, every rain-pool on the road. In the sunny intervals there was a great race and hurry of towered vapour, as I said; and when a shining mass smote one of the hill-sides, or shrouded for a while one of the more distant serrated crests, the concussion was so palpable to the eye that the ear felt defrauded, and silence seemed unnatural. And when the vast mass passed onward to impinge on some other mountain barrier, it was singular to notice by what slow degrees, with what evident reluctance the laggard skirts combed off. All these effects of rain and windy vapour I remember vividly, and I suppose that the vividness was partly due to the lamentable condition of a fellow-traveller. He was a meek-faced man of fifty. He was dressed in sables, his swallow-tailed coat was thread-bare, and withal seemed made for a smaller man. There was an uncomfortable space between the wrists of his coat and his black-thread gloves. He wore a hat, and against the elements had neither the protection of plaid nor umbrella. No one knew him, to no one did he explain his business. To my own notion he was bound for a funeral at some place beyond Portree. He was

not a clergyman—he might have been a schoolmaster who had become green-moulded in some out-of-the-way locality. Of course one or two of the rainy squalls settled the meek-faced man in the thread-bare sables. Emerging from one of these he resembled a draggled rook, and the rain was pouring from the brim of his pulpy hat as it might from the eaves of a cottage. A passenger handed him his spirit-flask, the meek-faced man took a hearty pull, and returning it, said plaintively, "I'm but poorly clad, sir, for this God-confounded climate." I think often of the utterance of the poor fellow: it was the only thing he said all the way; and when I think of it, I see again the rain blown out towards me on the wind like a waving sheet of muslin cloth, and the rush, the concussion, the upbreak, and the slow reluctant trailing off from the hill-side of the sunny cloud. The poor man's plaintive tone is the anchor which holds these things in my memory.

The forest is of course treeless. Nor are deer seen there frequently. Although I have crossed it frequently, only once did I get a sight of antlers. Carefully I crept up, sheltering myself behind a rocky haunch of the hill to where the herd were lying, and then rushed out upon them with a halloo. In an instant they were on their feet,

and away went the beautiful creatures, doe and fawn, a stag with branchy head leading. They dashed across a torrent, crowned an eminence one by one and disappeared. Such a sight is witnessed but seldom; and the traveller passing through the brown desolation sees usually no sign of life. In Lord Macdonald's deer forest neither trees nor deer are visible.

When once you get quit of the forest you come on a shooting-box, perched on the sea-shore; then you pass the little village of Sconser; and, turning the sharp flank of a hill, drive along Loch Sligachan to Sligachan Inn, about a couple of miles distant. This inn is a famous halting-place for tourists. There are good fishing streams about, I am given to understand, and through Glen Sligachan you can find your way to Camasunary, and take the boat from thence to Loch Coruisk, as we did. It was down this glen that the messenger was to have brought the tobacco to our peculiar friend. If you go you may perhaps find his skeleton scientifically articulated by the carrion crow and the raven. From the inn door the ridges of the Cuchullins are seen wildly invading the sky, and in closer proximity there are other hills which cannot be called beautiful. Monstrous, abnormal, chaotic, they resemble the other

hills on the earth's surface, as Hindoo deities resemble human beings. The mountain, whose sharp flank you turned after you passed Sconser, can be inspected leisurely now, and is to my mind supremely ugly. In summer it is red as copper, with great ragged patches of verdure upon it, which look by all the world as if the coppery mass had *rusted* green. On these green patches cattle feed from March to October. You bait at Sligachan,—can dine on trout which a couple of hours before were darting hither and thither in the stream, if you like,—and then drive leisurely along to Portree while the setting sun is dressing the wilderness in gold and rose. And all the way the Cuchullins follow you; the wild irregular outline, which no familiarity can stale, haunts you at Portree, as it does in nearly every quarter of Skye.

Portree folds two irregular ranges of white houses, the one range rising steeply above the other, around a noble bay, the entrance to which is guarded by rocky precipices. At a little distance the houses are white as shells, and as in summer they are all set in the greenness of foliage the effect is strikingly pretty; and if the sense of prettiness departs to a considerable extent on a closer acquaintance, there is yet enough left to gratify you so long as you remain there, and to

make it a pleasant place to think about when you are gone. The lower range of houses consists mainly of warehouses and fish-stores; the upper, of the main hotel, the two banks, the court-house, and the shops. A pier runs out into the bay, and here, when the state of tide permits, comes the steamer, on its way to or from Stornoway and unlades. Should the tide be low the steamer lies to in the bay, and her cargo and passengers come to shore by means of boats. She usually arrives at night; and at low tide, the burning of coloured lights at the mast-heads, the flitting hither and thither of busy lanterns, the pier boats coming and going with illumined wakes, and ghostly fires on the oar-blades, the clatter of chains and the shock of the crank hoisting the cargo out of the hold, the general hubbub and storm of Gaelic shouts and imprecations make the arrival at once picturesque and impressive. In the bay the yacht of the tourist is continually lying, and at the hotel door his dog-cart is continually departing or arriving. In the hotel parties arrange to visit Quirang or the Storr, and on the evenings of market-days, in the large public rooms, farmers and cattle-dealers sit over tumblers of smoking punch and discuss noisily the prices and the qualities of stock. Besides the hotel and the pier, the banks, and the

court-house already mentioned, there are other objects of interest in the little island town—three churches, a post-office, a poor-house, and a cloth manufactory. And it has more than meets the eye —one of the Jameses landed here on a visitation of the Isles, Prince Charles was here on his way to Raasay, Dr Johnson and Boswell were here; and somewhere on the green hill on which the pretty church stands, a murderer is buried—the precise spot of burial is unknown, and so the entire hill gets the credit that of right belongs only to a single yard of it. In Portree the tourist seldom abides long; he passes through it as a fortnight before he passed through Oban. It does not seem to the visitor a specially remarkable place, but everything is relative in this world. It is an event for the Islesman at Dunvegan or the Point of Sleat to go to Portree, just as it is an event for a Yorkshireman to go to London.

When you drive out of Portree you are in Macleod's country, and you discover that the character of the scenery has changed. Looking back, the Cuchullins are wild and pale on the horizon, but everything around is brown, softly-swelling, and monotonous. The hills are round and low, and except when an occasional boulder crops out on their sides like a wart, are smooth as a seal's

back. They are gray-green in colour, and may be grazed to the top. Expressing once to a shepherd my admiration of the Cuchullins, the man replied, while he swept with his arm the entire range, "There's no feeding there for twenty wethers!" here, however, there is sufficient feeding to compensate for any lack of beauty. About three miles out of Portree you come upon a solitary-looking school-house by the wayside, and a few yards farther to a division of the roads. A finger-post informs you that the road to the right leads to Uig, that to the left to Dunvegan. As I am at present bound for Dunvegan, I skirr along to the left, and after an hour's drive come in sight of blue Loch Snizort, with Skeabost sitting whitely on its margin. Far inland from the broad Minch, like one of those wavering swords which mediæval painters place in the hands of archangels, has Snizort come wandering; and it is the curious mixture of brine and pasture-land, of mariner life and shepherd life, which gives its charm to this portion of the island. The Lochs are narrow, and you almost fancy a strong-lunged man could shout across. The sea-gull skims above the feeding sheep, the shepherd can watch the sail of the sloop, laden with meal, creeping from point to point. In the spiritual

atmosphere of the country the superstitions of ocean and moorland mingle like two odours. Above all places which I have seen in Skye, Skeabost has a lowland look. There are almost no turf-huts to be seen in the neighbourhood; the houses are built of stone and lime, and are tidily white-washed. The hills are low and smooth; on the lower slopes corn and wheat are grown; and from a little distance the greenness of cultivation looks like a palpable smile—a strange contrast to the monotonous district through which, for an hour or so, you have driven. As you pass the inn, and drive across the bridge, you notice that there is an island in the stony stream, and that this island is covered with ruins. The Skye-man likes to bury his dead in islands, and this one in the stream at Skeabost is a crowded cemetery. I forded the stream, and wandered for an hour amongst the tombs and broken stones. There are traces of an ancient chapel on the island, but tradition does not even make a guess at its builder's name or the date of its erection. There are old slabs, lying sideways, with the figures of recumbent men with swords in their hands, and inscriptions—indecipherable now—carved on them. There is the grave of a Skye clergyman who, if his epitaph is to be trusted, was a burning and a shining light in his day

—a gospel candle irradiating the Hebridean darkness. I never saw a churchyard so mounded, and so evidently over-crowded. Here laird, tacksman, and cotter elbow each other in death. Here no one will make way for a new-comer, or give the wall to his neighbour. And standing in the little ruined island of silence and the dead, with the river perfectly audible on either side, one could not help thinking what a picturesque sight a Highland funeral would be, creeping across the moors with wailing pipe-music, fording the river, and his bearers making room for the dead man amongst the older dead as best they could. And this sight, I am told, may be seen any week in the year. To this island all the funerals of the country-side converge. Standing there, too, one could not help thinking that this space of silence, girt by river noises, would be an *eerie* place by moonlight. The broken chapel, the carved slabs lying sideways, as if the dead man beneath had grown restless and turned himself, and the head-stones jutting out of the mounded soil at every variety of angle, would appal in the ink of shadow and the silver of moonbeam. In such circumstances one would hear something more in the stream as it ran past than the mere breaking of water on stones.

After passing the river and the island of graves

you drive down between hedges to Skeabost church, school, post-office, and manse, and thereafter you climb the steep hill towards Bernesdale and its colony of turf-huts ; and when you reach the top you have a noble view of the flat blue Minch, and the Skye headlands, each precipitous, abrupt, and reminding you somehow of a horse which has been suddenly reined back to its haunches. The flowing lines of those headlands suggest an onward motion, and then, all at once, they shrink back upon themselves, as if they feared the roar of breakers and the smell of the brine. But the grand vision is not of long duration, for the road descends rapidly towards Taynlone Inn. In my descent I beheld two bare-footed and bare-headed girls yoked to a harrow, and dragging it up and down a small plot of delved ground.

Sitting in the inn I began to remember me how frequently I had heard in the south of the destitution of the Skye people and the discomfort of the Skye hut. During my wanderings I had the opportunity of visiting several of these dwellings, and seeing how matters were transacted within. Frankly speaking, the Highland hut is not a model edifice. It is open to wind, and almost always pervious to rain. An old bottomless herring-firkin stuck in the roof usually serves for chimney, but the blue peat-reek

disdains that aperture, and steams wilfully through the door and the crannies in the walls and roof. The interior is seldom well-lighted—what light there is proceeding rather from the orange glow of the peat-fire, on which a large pot is simmering, than from the narrow pane with its great bottle-green bull's-eye. The rafters which support the roof are black and glossy with soot, as you can notice by sudden flashes of firelight. The sleeping accommodation is limited, and the beds are composed of heather or ferns. The floor is the beaten earth, the furniture is scanty; there is hardly ever a chair—stools and stones, worn smooth by the usage of several generations, have to do instead. One portion of the hut is not unfrequently a byre, and the breath of the cow is mixed with the odour of peat-reek, and the *baa* of the calf mingles with the wranglings and swift ejaculations of the infant Highlanders. In such a hut as this there are sometimes three generations. The mother stands knitting outside, the children are scrambling on the floor with the terrier and the poultry, and a ray of cloudy sunshine from the narrow pane smites the silver hairs of the grandfather near the fire, who is mending fishing-nets against the return of his son-in-law from the south. Am I inclined to lift my hands in horror at witnessing such a dwelling?

Certainly not. I have only given one side of the picture. The hut I speak of nestles beneath a rock, on the top of which dances the ash-tree and the birch. The emerald mosses on its roof are softer and richer than the velvets of kings. Twenty yards down that path you will find a well that needs no ice in the dog-days. At a little distance, from rocky shelf to shelf, trips a mountain burn, with abundance of trout in the brown pools. At the distance of a mile is the sea, which is not allowed to ebb and flow in vain; for in the smoke there is a row of fishes drying; and on the floor a curly-headed urchin of three years or thereby is pommeling the terrier with the scarlet claw of a lobster. Methought, too, when I entered I saw beside the door a heap of oyster shells. Within the hut there is good food, if a little scant at times; without there is air that will call colour back to the cheek of an invalid, pure water, play, exercise, work. That the people are healthy, you may see from their strong frames, brown faces, and the age to which many attain; that they are happy and light-hearted, the shouts of laughter that ring round the peat-fire of an evening may be taken as sufficient evidence. I protest I cannot become pathetic over the Highland hut. I have sat in these turfen dwellings, amid the surgings of blue

smoke, and received hospitable welcome, and found amongst the inmates good sense, industry, family affection, contentment, piety, happiness. And when I have heard philanthropists, with more zeal than discretion, maintain that these dwellings are a disgrace to the country in which they are found, I have thought of districts of great cities which I have seen,—within the sound of the rich man's chariot wheels, within hearing of multitudinous Sabbath bells—of evil scents and sights and sounds; of windows stuffed with rags; of female faces that look out on you as out of a sadder Inferno than that of Dante's; of faces of men containing the *débris* of the entire decalogue, faces which hurt you more than a blow would: of infants poisoned with gin, of children bred for the prison and the hulks. Depend upon it there are worse odours than peat smoke, worse next-door neighbours than a cow or a brood of poultry; and although a couple of girls dragging a harrow be hardly in accordance with our modern notions, yet we need not forget that there are worse employment for girls than even that. I do not stand up for the Highland hut; but in one of these smoky cabins I would a thousand-fold rather spend my days than in the Cowgate of Edinburgh, or in one of the streets that radiate from Seven Dials.

After travelling three or four days, I beheld on the other side of a long, blue, river-like loch, the house of the Landlord. From the point at which I now paused, a boat could have taken me across in half an hour, but as the road wound round the top of the Loch, I had yet some eight or ten miles to drive before my journey was accomplished. Meantime the Loch was at ebb and the sun was setting. On the hill-side, on my left as I drove, stretched a long street of huts covered with smoky wreaths, and in front of each a strip of cultivated ground ran down to the road which skirted the shore. Potatoes grew in one strip or lot, turnips in a second, corn in a third, and as these crops were in different stages of advancement, the entire hill-side, from the street of huts downward, resembled one of those counterpanes which thrifty housewifes manufacture by sewing together patches of different patterns. Along the road running at the back of the huts a cart was passing; on the moory hill behind, a flock of sheep, driven by men and dogs, was contracting and expanding itself like quicksilver. The women were knitting at the hut doors, the men were at work in the cultivated patches in front. On all this scene of cheerful and fortunate industry, on men and women, on turnips, oats, and potatoes, on cottages set in azure

films of peat-reek, the rosy light was striking—making a pretty spectacle enough. From the whole hill-side breathed peace, contentment, happiness, and a certain sober beauty of usefulness. Man and nature seemed in perfect agreement and harmony—man willing to labour, nature to yield increase. Down to the head of the Loch the road sloped rapidly, and at the very head a small village had established itself. It contained an inn, a school-house, in which divine service was held on Sundays; a smithy, a merchant's shop—all traders are called *merchants* in Skye—and, by the side of a stream which came brawling down from rocky steep to steep, stood a corn mill, the big wheel lost in a watery mist of its own raising, the door and windows dusty with meal. Behind the village lay a stretch of black moorland intersected by drains and trenches, and from the black huts which seemed to have grown out of the moor, and the spaces of sickly green here and there, one could see that the desolate and forbidding region had its colonists, and that they were valiantly attempting to wring a sustenance out of it. Who were the squatters on the black moorland? Had they accepted their hard conditions as a matter of choice, or had they been banished there by a

superior power? Did the dweller in those outlying huts bear the same relation to the villagers, or the flourishing cotters on the hill-side, that the gipsy bears to the English peasant, or the red Indian to the Canadian farmer? I had no one to inform me at the time; meanwhile the sunset fell on these remote dwellings, lending them what beauty and amelioration of colour it could, making a drain sparkle for a moment, turning a far-off pool into gold leaf, and rendering, by contrast of universal warmth and glow, yet more beautiful the smoke which swathed the houses. Yet after all the impression made upon one was cheerless enough. Sunset goes but a little way in obviating human wretchedness. It fires the cottage window, but it cannot call to life the corpse within; it can sparkle on the chain of a prisoner, but with all its sparkling it does not make the chain one whit the lighter. Misery is often picturesque, but the picturesqueness is in the eyes of others, not in her own. The black moorland and the banished huts abode in my mind during the remainder of my drive.

Everything about a man is characteristic, more or less; and in the house of the Landlord I found that singular mixture of hemispheres which I had before noticed in his talk and in his way of look-

ing at times. His house was plain enough externally, but its furniture was curious and far-brought. The interior of his porch was adorned with heads of stags and tusks of elephants. He would show you Highland relics, and curiosities from sacked Eastern palaces. He had the tiny porcelain cup out of which Prince Charles drank tea at Kingsburgh, and the signet ring which was stripped from the dead fingers of Tippoo Saib. In his gun-room were modern breech-loaders and revolvers, and matchlocks from China and Nepaul. On the walls were Lochaber axes, claymores, and targets that might have seen service at Inverlochy, hideous creases, Afghan daggers, curiously-curved swords, scabbards thickly crusted with gems. In the library the last new novel leaned against the "Institutes of Menu." On the drawing-room table, beside *carte-de-visite* books, were ivory card-cases wrought by the patient Hindoo artificer as finely as we work our laces, Chinese puzzles that baffled all European comprehension, and comical squab-faced deities in silver and bronze. While the Landlord was absent, I could fancy these strangely-assorted articles striking one with a sense of incongruity: but when at home, each seemed a portion of himself. He was related as closely to the Indian god as to Prince Charles's cup. The ash and birch

of the Highlands danced before his eyes, the palm stood in his imagination and memory.

And then he surrounded himself with all kinds of pets, and lived with them on the most intimate terms. When he entered the breakfast-room his terriers barked and frisked and jumped about him; his great black hare-hound, Maida, got up from the rug on which it had been basking and thrust its sharp nose into his hand; his canaries broke into emulous music, as if sunshine had come into the room; the parrot in the porch clambered along the cage with horny claws, settled itself on its perch, bobbed its head up and down for a moment, and was seized with hooping-cough. When he went out the black hare-hound followed at his heel; the peacock, strutting on the gravel in the shelter of the larches, unfurled its starry fan; in the stable his horses turned round to smell his clothes and to have their foreheads stroked: melodious thunder broke from the dog-kennel when he came: and at his approach his falcons did not withdraw haughtily, as if in human presence there was profanation; they listened to his voice, and a gentler something tamed for a moment the fierce cairngorms of their eyes. When others came near they ruffled their plumage and uttered sharp cries of anger.

After breakfast it was his habit to carry the parrot out to a long iron garden-seat in front of the house—where, if sunshine was to be had at all, you were certain to find it—and placing the cage beside him, smoke a cheroot. The parrot would clamber about the cage, suspended head downwards would take crafty stock of you with an eye which had perhaps looked out on the world for a century or so, and then, righting itself, peremptorily insist that Polly should put on the kettle, and that the boy should shut up the grog. On one special morning, while the Landlord was smoking and the parrot whooping and whistling, several men, dressed in rough pilot cloth which had seen much service and known much darning, came along the walk and respectfully uncovered. Returning their salutation, the Landlord threw away the end of his cheroot and went forward to learn their message. The conversation was in Gaelic: slow and gradual at first, it quickened anon, and broke into gusts of altercation; and on these occasions I noticed that the Landlord would turn impatiently on his heel, march a pace or two back to the house, and then, wheeling round, return to the charge. He argued in the unknown tongue, gesticulated, was evidently impressing something on his auditors which they were un-

willing to receive, for at intervals they would look in one another's faces,—a look plainly implying, "Did you ever hear the like?" and give utterance to a murmured *chit, chit, chit* of dissent and humble protestation. At last the matter got itself amicably settled, the deputation—each man making a short sudden duck before putting on his bonnet —withdrew, and the Landlord came back to the parrot, which had, now with one eye, now with another, been watching the proceeding. He sat down with a slight air of annoyance.

"These fellows are wanting more meal," he said, "and one or two are pretty deep in my books already."

"Do you, then, keep regular accounts with them?"

"Of course. I give nothing for nothing. I wish to do them as much good as I can. They are a good deal like my old ryots, only the ryot was more supple and obsequious."

"Where do your friends come from?" I asked.

"From the village over there," pointing across the narrow blue loch. "Pretty Polly! Polly!"

The parrot was climbing up and down the cage, taking hold of the wires with beak and claw as it did so.

"I wish to know something of your villagers.

The cotters on the hill-side seem comfortable enough, but I wish to know something of the black land and the lonely huts behind."

"Oh," said he, laughing, "that is my penal settlement—I 'll drive you over to-morrow." He then got up, tossed a stone into the shrubbery, after which Maida dashed, thrust his hands into his breeches' pocket for a moment, and marched into the house.

Next morning we drove across to the village, and pretty enough it looked as we alighted. The big water-wheel of the mill whirred industrious music, flour flying about the door and windows. Two or three people were standing at the merchant's shop. At the smithy a horse was haltered, and within were brilliant showers of sparks and the merry clink of hammers. The sunshine made pure amber the pools of the tumbling burn, and in one of these a girl was rinsing linen, the light touching her hair into a richer colour. Our arrival at the inn created some little stir. The dusty miller came out, the smith came to the door rubbing down his apron with a horny palm, the girl stood upright by the burn-side shading her eyes with her hand, one of the men at the merchant's shop went within to tell the news, the labourers in the fields round about stopped work to stare.

The machine was no sooner put to rights and the horses taken round to the stable than the mistress of the house complained that the roof was leaky, and she and the Landlord went in to inspect the same. Left alone for a little, I could observe that, seeing my friend had arrived, the people were resolved to make some use of him, and here and there I noticed them laying down their crooked spades, and coming down towards the inn. One old woman, with a white handkerchief tied round her head, sat down on a stone opposite, and when the Landlord appeared—the matter of the leaky roof having been arranged—she rose and dropped a courtesy. She had a complaint to make, a benefit to ask, a wrong to be redressed. I could not, of course, understand a word of the conversation, but curiously sharp and querulous was her voice, with a slight suspicion of the whine of the mendicant in it, and every now and then she would give a deep sigh, and smooth down her apron with both her hands. I suspect the old lady gained her object, for when the Landlord cracked his joke at parting the most curious sunshine of merriment came into the withered features, lighting them up and changing them, and giving one, for a flying second, some idea of what she must have been in her middle age, perhaps in her early youth,

when she as well as other girls had a sweetheart.

In turn we visited the merchant's shop, the smithy, and the mill; then we passed the schoolhouse—which was one confused murmur, the sharp voice of the teacher striking through at intervals—and turning up a narrow road, came upon the black region and the banished huts. The cultivated hill-side was shining in sunlight, the cottages smoking, the people at work in their crofts—everything looking blithe and pleasant; and under the bright sky and the happy weather the penal settlement did not look nearly so forbidding as it had done when, under the sunset, I had seen it a few evenings previously. The houses were rude, but they seemed sufficiently weather-tight. Each was set down in a little oasis of cultivation, a little circle in which by labour the sour land had been coaxed into a smile of green; each small domain was enclosed by a low turfen wall, and on the top of one of these a wild goat-looking sheep was feeding, which, as we approached, jumped down with an alarmed bleat, and then turned to gaze on the intruders. The land was sour and stony, the dwellings framed of the rudest materials, and the people—for they all came forward to meet him, and at each turfen wall the Landlord held a

levée—especially the older people, gave one the idea somehow of worn-out tools. In some obscure way they reminded one of bent and warped oars, battered spades, blunted pickaxes. On every figure was written hard, unremitting toil. Toil had twisted their frames, seamed and puckered their leathern faces, made their hands horny, bleached their grizzled locks. Your fancy had to run back along years and years of labour before it could arrive at the original boy or girl. Still they were cheerful-looking after a sort, contented, and loquacious withal. The man took off his bonnet, the woman dropped her courtesy, before pouring into the Landlord's ear how the wall of the house wanted mending, how a neighbour's sheep had come into the corn, had been *driven* into the corn out of foul spite and envy it was suspected, how new seed would be required for next year's sowing, how the six missing fleeces had been found in the hut of the old soldier across the river, and all the other items which made up their world. And the Landlord, his black hound couched at his feet, would sit down on a stone, or lean against the turf wall and listen to the whole of it, and consult as to the best way to repair the decaying house, and discover how defendant's sheep came into complainant's corn, and give judgment, and promise new seed

to old Donald, and walk over to the soldier's and pluck the heart out of the mystery of the missing fleeces. And going in and out amongst his people, his functions were manifold. He was not Landlord only—he was leech, lawyer, divine. He prescribed medicine, he set broken bones, and tied up sprained ankles; he was umpire in a hundred petty quarrels, and damped out wherever he went every flame of wrath. Nor, when it was needed, was he without ghostly counsel. On his land he would permit no unbaptized child; if Donald was drunk and brawling at a fair, he would, when the inevitable headache and nausea were gone, drop in and improve the occasion, to Donald's much discomfiture and his many blushes; and with the bed-ridden woman, or the palsied man, who for years had sat in the corner of the hut as constantly as a statue sits within its niche—just where the motty sunbeam from the pane with its great knob of bottle-green struck him—he held serious conversations, and uttered words which come usually from the lips of a clergyman.

We then went through the cottages on the cultivated hill-side, and there another series of *levées* were held. One cotter complained that his neighbour had taken advantage of him in this or the other matter: another man's good name had been

aspersed by a scandalous tongue, and ample apology must be made, else the sufferer would bring the asperser before the sheriff. Norman had borrowed for a day Neil's plough, had broken the shaft, and when requested to make reparation, had refused in terms too opprobrious to be repeated. The man from Sleat who had a year or two ago come to reside in these parts, and with whom the world had gone prosperously, was minded at next fair to buy another cow—would he therefore be allowed to rent the croft which lay alongside the one which he already possessed? To these cotters the Landlord gave attentive ear, standing beside the turf dike, leaning against the walls of their houses, sitting down inside in the peat smoke—the children gathered together in the farthest corner, and regarding him with no little awe. And so he came to know all the affairs of his people—who was in debt, who was waging a doubtful battle with the world, who had money in the bank; and going daily amongst them he was continually engaged in warning, expostulation, encouragement, rebuke. Nor was he always sunshine: he was occasionally lightning too. The tropical tornado, which unroofs houses and splits trees, was within the possibilities of his moods as well as the soft wind which caresses the newly-yeaned lamb. Against greed,

laziness, dishonesty, he flamed like a seven-times heated furnace. When he found that argument had no effect on the obstinate or the pig-headed, he suddenly changed his tactics, and descended in a shower of *chaff*, which is to the Gael an unknown and terrible power, dissolving opposition as salt dissolves a snail.

The last cotter had been seen, the last *levée* had been held, and we then climbed up to the crown of the hill to visit the traces of an old fortification, or *dün*, as the Skye people call it. These ruins, and they are thickly scattered over the island, are supposed to be of immense antiquity—so old, that Ossian may have sung in each to a circle of Fingalian chiefs. When we reached the *dün*—a loose congregation of mighty stones, scattered in a circular form, with some rude remnants of an entrance and a covered way—we sat down, and the Landlord lighted a cheroot. Beneath lay the little village covered with smoke. Far away to the right, Skye stretched into ocean, pale headland after headland. In front, over a black wilderness of moor, rose the conical forms of Macleod's Tables, and one thought of the "restless bright Atlantic plain" beyond. the endless swell and shimmer of watery ridges, the clouds of sea birds, the sudden glistening upheaval of a whale and its disappearance, the smoky trail

of a steamer on the horizon, the tacking of white-sailed craft. On the left, there was nothing but moory wilderness and hill, with something on a slope flashing in the sunshine like a diamond. A falcon palpitating in the intense blue above, the hare-hound cocked her ears and looked out alertly, the Landlord with his field-glass counted the sheep feeding on the hill-side a couple of miles off. Suddenly he closed the glass, and lay back on the heather, puffing a column of white smoke into the air.

"I suppose," said I, "your going in and out amongst your tenants to-day is very much the kind of thing you used to do in India?"

"Exactly. I know these fellows, every man of them—and they know me. We get on very well together. I know everything they do. I know all their secrets, all their family histories, everything they wish, and everything they fear. I think I have done them some good since I came amongst them."

"But," said I, "I wish you to explain to me your system of penal servitude, as you call it. In what respect do the people on the cultivated hill-side differ from the people in the black ground behind the village?"

"Willingly. But I must premise that the giv-

ing away of money in charity is, in nine cases out of ten, tantamount to throwing money into the fire. It does no good to the bestower: it does absolute harm to the receiver. You see I have taken the management of these people into my own hands. I have built a school-house for them—on which we will look in and overhaul on our way down—I have built a shop, as you see, a smithy, and a mill. I have done everything for them, and I insist that, when a man becomes my tenant, he shall pay me rent. If I did not so insist I should be doing an injury to myself and to him. The people on the hill-side pay me rent; not a man Jack of them is at this moment one farthing in arrears. The people down there in the black land behind the village, which I am anxious to reclaim, don't pay rent. They are broken men, broken sometimes by their own fault and laziness, sometimes by culpable imprudence, sometimes by stress of circumstances. When I settle a man there I build him a house, make him a present of a bit of land, give him tools, should he require them, and set him to work. He has the entire control of all he can produce. He improves my land, and can, if he is industrious, make a comfortable living. I won't have a pauper on my place: the very sight of a pauper sickens me."

"But why do you call the black lands your penal settlement?"

Here the Landlord laughed. "Because, should any of the crofters on the hill-side, either from laziness or misconduct, fall into arrears, I transport him at once. I punish him by sending him among the people who pay no rent. It's like taking the stripes off a sergeant's arm and degrading him to the ranks; and if there is any spirit in the man he tries to regain his old position. I wish my people to respect themselves, and to hold poverty in horror."

"And do many get back to the hill-side again?"

"Oh, yes! and they are all the better for their temporary banishment. I don't wish residence there to be permanent in any case. When one of these fellows gets on, makes a little money, I have him up here at once among the rent-paying people. I draw the line at a cow."

"How?"

"When a man by industry or by self-denial has saved money enough to buy a cow, I consider the black land is no longer the place for him. He is able to pay rent, and he must pay it. I brought an old fellow up here the other week, and very unwilling he was to come. He had bought himself a cow, and so I marched him up here at once. I

wish to stir all these fellows up, to put into them a little honest pride and self-respect."

"And how do they take to your system?"

"Oh, they grumbled a good deal at first, and thought their lines were hard; but discovering that my schemes have been for their benefit, they are content enough now. In these black lands, you observe, I not only rear corn and potatoes, I rear and train men, which is the most valuable crop of all. But let us be going. I wish you to see my scholars. I think I have got one or two smart lads down there."

In a short time we reached the school-house, a plain, substantial-looking building, standing midway between the inn and the banished huts. As it was arranged that neither schoolmaster nor scholar should have the slightest idea that they were to be visited that day, we were enabled to see the school in its ordinary aspect. When we entered the master came forward and shook hands with the Landlord, the boys pulled their red fore-locks, the girls dropped their best courtesies. Sitting down on a form I noted the bare walls, a large map hanging on one side, the stove with a heap of peats near it, the ink-smeared bench and the row of girls' heads, black, red, yellow, and brown, surmounting it, and the boys, barefooted and in tattered kilts,

gathered near the window. The girls regarded us with a shy, curious gaze, which was not ungraceful; and in several of the freckled faces there was the rudiments of beauty, or of comeliness at least. The eyes of all, boys as well as girls, kept twinkling over our persons, taking silent note of everything. I don't think I ever before was the subject of so much curiosity. One was pricked all over by quick-glancing eyes as by pins. We had come to examine the school, and the ball opened by a display of copy books. Opening these, we found pages covered with "*Emulation is a generous passion*," "*Emancipation does not make man*," in very fair and legible handwriting. Expressing our satisfaction, the schoolmaster bowed low, and the prickling of the thirty or forty curious eyes became yet more keen and rapid. The schoolmaster then called for those who wished to be examined in geography—very much as a colonel might seek volunteers for a forlorn hope—and in a trice six scholars, kilted, of various ages and sizes, but all shock-headed and ardent, were drawn up in line in front of the large map. A ruler was placed in the hand of a little fellow at the end, who, with his eyes fixed on the schoolmaster and his body bent forward eagerly, seemed as waiting the

signal to start off in a race. "Number one, point out river Tagus." Number one charged the Peninsula with his ruler as ardently as his great-grandfather in all probability charged the French at Quebec. "Through what country does the Tagus flow?" "Portugal." "What is the name of the capital city?" "Lisbon." Number one having accomplished his devoir, the ruler was handed on to number two, who traced the course of the Danube, and answered several questions thereanent with considerable intelligence. Number five was a little fellow; he was asked to point out Portree, and as the Western Islands hung too high in the north for him to reach, he jumped at them. He went into the North Sea the first time, but on his second attempt he smote Skye with his ruler very neatly. Numbers three, four, and six acquitted themselves creditably—number four boggling a little deal about Constantinople—much to the vexation of the schoolmaster. Slates were then produced, and the six geographers—who were the cream of the school, I daresay—were prepared for arithmetical action. As I was examiner, and had no desire to get into deep waters, the efforts of my kilted friends were, at my request, confined to the good old rule of simple addition. The schoolmaster called out ten or

eleven ranks of figures, and then cried *add.* Six swishes of the slate-pencil were heard, and then began the arithmetical tug of war. Each face was immediately hidden behind a slate, and we could hear the quick tinkle of pencils. All at once there was a hurried swish, and the red-head, who had boggled about Constantinople, flashed round his slate on me with the summation fairly worked out. Flash went another slate, then another, till the six were held out. All the answers corresponded, and totting up the figures I found them correct. Then books were procured, and we listened to English reading. In a loud tone of voice, as if they were addressing some one on an opposite hill-side, and with barbarous intonation, the little fellows read off about a dozen sentences each. Now and again a big word brought a reader to grief, as a tall fence brings a steeple-chaser; now and again a reader went through a word as a hunter goes through a hedge which he cannot clear—but, on the whole, they deserved the commendation which they received. The Landlord expressed his satisfaction, and mentioned that he had left at the inn two baskets of gooseberries for the scholars. The schoolmaster again bowed; and although the eyes of the scholars were as bright and curious as

before, they had laid their heads together, and were busily whispering now.

The schools in Skye bear the same relationship to the other educational establishments of the country that a turf-hut bears to a stone-and-lime cottage. These schools are scattered thinly up and down the Island, and the pupils are unable to attend steadily on account of the distances they have to travel, and the minor agricultural avocations in which they are at intervals engaged. The schoolmaster is usually a man of no surpassing intelligence or acquirement; he is wretchedly remunerated, and his educational aids and appliances, such as books, maps, &c., are defective. But still a turf-hut is better than no shelter, and a Skye school is better than no school at all. The school, for instance, which we had just visited, was an authentic light in the darkness. There boys and girls were taught reading, writing, and ciphering—plain and homely accomplishments it is true, but accomplishments that bear the keys of all the doors that lead to wealth and knowledge. The boy or girl who can read, write, and cast up accounts deftly, is not badly equipped for the battle of life; and although the school which the Landlord has established is plain and unostentatious in its forms

and modes of instruction, it at least, with tolerable success, teaches these. For the uses made of them by the pupils in after life, the pupils are themselves responsible.

ORBOST AND DUNVEGAN.

PUNCTUALLY at nine next morning there was a grating of wheels on the gravel, and Malcolm and his dog-cart were at the door. After a little delay I took my place on the vehicle and we drove off. Malcolm was a thick-set, good-humoured, red haired and whiskered little fellow, who could be silent for half a day if needed, but who could speak, and speak to the point, too, when required. When driving, and especially when the chestnut mare exhibited any diminution of speed, he kept up a running fire of ejaculations. "Go on," he would say, as he shook the reins, for the whip he mercifully spared, "what are you thinking about?" "Hoots! chit, chit, chit! I'm ashamed of you!" "Now then. Hoots!" and these reproaches seemed to touch the mare's heart, for at every ejaculation she made a dash forward as if the whip had touched her.

On the way from Grishornish to Dunvegan, about a couple of miles from the latter place, a road branches off to the right and runs away downward

through the heathery waste; and about forty yards onward you come to a bridge spanning a gully, and into this gully three streams leap and become one, and then the sole stream flows also to the right with shallow fall and brawling rapid, the companion of the descending road. The road up to the bridge is steep, but it is steeper beyond, and at the bridge Malcolm jumped down and walked alongside with the reins in his hands. In the slow progression your eye naturally follows the road and the stream; and beyond the flank of a hill sloping gradually down to the purple gloom of undulating moorland, you catch a glimpse of a bit of blue sea, some white broken cliffs that drop down into it; and, leaning on these cliffs, a great green sunny strath, with a white dot of a house upon it. The glimpse of sea, and white cliffs, and stretch of sunny greenness is pleasant; the hill, which you have yet to climb, keeps the sun from you, and all around are low heathery eminences. You stare at the far-off sunlit greenness, and having satisfied yourself therewith, begin to examine the ground above and on either side of the bridge, and find it possessed of much pastoral richness and variety. The main portion is covered with heather, but near you there are clumps of ferns, and further back are soft banks and platforms of verdure on which kine

might browse and ruminate, and which only require the gilding of sunshine to make them beautiful. "What bridge is this?" I asked of Malcolm, who was still trudging alongside with the reins in his hand. "The Fairy Bridge"—and then I was told that the fairy sits at sunset on the green knolls and platforms of pasture chirming and singing songs to the cows; and that when a traveller crosses the bridge, and toils up the hill, she is sure to accompany him. As this was our own course, I asked, "Is the fairy often seen now?" "Not often. It's the old people who know about her. The shepherds sometimes hear her singing when they are coming down the hill; and years ago, a pedlar was found lying across the road up there dead; and it was thought that the fairy had walked along with him. But, indeed, I never saw or heard her myself—only that is what the old people say." And so in a modern dog-cart you are slowly passing through one of the haunted places in Skye!

I fancy Malcolm must have seen that this kind of talk interested me. "Did you ever hear, sir, about the Battle of the Spoiling of the Dikes down at Trompon Kirk, yonder?" and he pointed with his whip to the yellow-green strath which broke down in cliffs to the sea.

I answered that I never had, and Malcolm's narrative flowed on at once.

"You see, sir, there was a feud between the Macdonalds of the Mainland and the Macleods of Trotternish; and one Sunday, when the Macleods were in church, the Macdonalds came at full of tide, unknown to any one, and fastened their boats to the arched rocks on the shore—for it's a strange coast down there, full of caves and natural bridges and arches. Well, after they had fastened their boats, they surrounded the church, secured the door, and set it on fire. Every one was burned that Sunday except one woman, who squeezed herself through a window—it was so narrow that she left one of her breasts behind her—and escaped carrying the news. She raised the country with her crying and the sight of her bloody clothes. The people—although it was Sunday—rose, men and women, and came down to the burning church, and there the battle began. The men of Macleod's country fought, and the women picked up the blunted arrows, sharpened them on the stones, and then gave them to the men. The Macdonalds were beaten at last, and made for their boats. But by this time it was ebb of tide; and what did they see but the boats in which they had come, and which they had fastened

to the rocky arches, hanging in the air! Like an otter, when its retreat to the sea is cut off, the Macdonalds turned on the men of Macleod's country and fought till the last of them fell, and in the sheughs of the sand their blood was running down red into the sea. At that time the tide came further in than it does now, and the people had built a turf dike to keep it back from their crops. Then they took the bodies of the Macdonalds and laid them down side by side at the foot of the dike, and tumbled it over on the top of them. That was the way they were buried. And after they had tumbled the dike they were vexed, for they minded then that the sea might come in and destroy their crops. That's the reason that the battle is called the Battle of the Spoiled Dikes."

"The men of Macleod's country would regret the spoiling of the dikes, as Bruce the battle-axe with which, on the evening before Bannockburn, and in the seeing of both armies, he cracked the skull of the English knight who came charging down upon him."

Undiverted by my remark, Malcolm went on, "Maybe, sir, you have seen the Sciur of Eig as you came past in the steamer?"

"Yes, and I know the story. The Macdonalds were cooped up in a cave, and the Mac-

leods ranged over the island and could find no trace of them. They then in high dudgeon returned to their boats, meaning to depart next morning. There was a heavy fall of snow during the night, was there not? and just when the Macleods were about to sail, the figure of a man, who had come out to see if the invaders were gone, was discerned on the top of the Sciur, against the sky line. The Macleods returned, and by the foot-prints in the snow they tracked the man to his hiding-place. They then heaped up heath and what timber they could procure, at the mouth of the cave, applied fire, and suffocated all who had therein taken shelter. Is that not it?"

"The Macdonalds first burned the church at Trompon down there. The bones of the Macdonalds are lying in the cave to this day, they say. I should like to see them."

"But don't you think it was a dreadful revenge? Eig was one of the safe places of the Macdonalds; and the people in the cave were chiefly old men, women, and children. Don't you think it was a very barbarous act, Malcolm?"

"I don't know," said Malcolm; "I am a Macleod myself."

By the time I had heard the story of Lady Grange, who sleeps in the Trompon churchyard,

we had toiled pretty well up the steep ascent. On our way we heard no fairy singing to the kine, nor did any unearthly figure accompany us. Perhaps the witchery of the setting sun was needed. By the time we reached the top of the hill the pyramidical forms of Macleod's Tables were distinctly visible, and then Malcolm took his seat beside me in the dog-cart.

Macleod's Tables, two hills as high as Arthur's Seat, flat at the top as any dining-table in the country—from which peculiar conformation indeed they draw their names—and covered deep into spring by a table-cloth of snow; Macleod's Maidens, three spires of rock rising sheer out of the sea, shaped like women, around whose feet the foamy wreaths are continually forming, fleeting, and disappearing—what magic in the names of rocky spire and flat-topped hill to him who bears the name of Macleod, and who can call them his own! What is modern wealth—association-less, without poetry, melting like snow in the hot hand of a spendthrift—compared to that old inheritance of land, which is patent to the eye, which bears your name, around which legends gather,—all vital to you as your great-grandmother's blue eyes and fair hair; as your great-grandfather's hot temper and the corrugation of his forehead

when he frowned! These bold landmarks of family possession must be regarded with peculiar interest by the family. They make the white sheet on which you—a shadow of fifty years or thereby—are projected by the camera obscura of fate. The Tables and the Maidens remain for ever bearing your name, while you—the individual Macleod—are as transitory as the mist wreath of the morning which melts on the one, or the momentary shape of wind-blown foam which perishes on the base of the other. The value of these things is spiritual, and cannot be affected by the click of the auctioneer's hammer, or the running of the hour-glass sand on the lawyer's table after the title-deeds have been read and the bids are being made. Wealth is mighty, but it can no more buy these things than it can buy love, or reverence, or piety. Jones may buy the Tables and the Maidens, but they do not own him; he is for ever an alien: they wear the ancient name, they dream the ancient dream. When poverty has stripped your livery from all your servants, they remain faithful. When an Airlie is about to die, with tuck of drum, they say, a ghostly soldier marches round the castle. Rothschild, with all his millions, could not buy that drummer's services. What is the use of buying an estate to-day? It is

never wholly yours; the old owner holds part possession with you. It is like marrying a widow; you hold her heart, but you hold it in partnership with the dead. I should rather be the plainest English yeoman whose family has been in possession of a farm since the Heptarchy than be the richest banker in Europe. The majority of men are like Arabs, their tents are pitched here to-night and struck to-morrow. Those families only who have held lands for centuries can claim an abiding home. In such families there is a noble sense of continuity, of the unbroken onflowing of life. The pictures and the furniture speak of forefather and foremother. Your ancestor's name is on your books, and you see the pencil marks which he has placed against the passages that pleased him. The necklace your daughter wears heaved on the breast of the ancestress from whom she draws her smile and her eyes. The rookery that caws to-night in the sober sunset cawed in the ears of the representative of your house some half-dozen generations back —the very same in every respect, 'tis the individual rooks only that have changed. The full-foliaged murmur of the woods shape your name, and yours only. As for these Macleods——

"That's Orbost, sir, the house under the hill," said Malcolm, pointing with his whip, and obviously

tired of the prolonged silence, "and yonder on the left are the Cuchullins. The sea is down there, but you cannot see it from this. We 'll be there in half an hour," and exactly in half an hour, with Macleod's Tables behind us, we passed the garden and the offices, and alighted on the daisied sward before the house.

After I had wandered about for an hour I made up my mind that, had I the choice, I should rather live at Orbost than at any other house in Skye. And yet, at Orbost, the house itself is the only thing that can reasonably be objected to. In the first place, it is one of those elegant expressionless houses in the Italian style with which one is familiar in the suburban districts of large cities, and as such it is quite out of keeping with the scenery and the spiritual atmosphere of the island. It is too modern, and villa like. It is as innocent of a legend as Pall Mall. It does not believe in ghost stories. It has a dandified and sceptical look; and as it has not taken to the island, the island has not taken to it. Around it trees have not grown well; they are mere stunted trunks, bare, hoary, wind-writhen. There is not a lichen or discoloration on its smoothly-chiselled walls; not a single chimney or gable has been shrouded with affectionate ivy. It looks like a house which

has "cut" the locality, and which the locality has "cut" in return. In the second place, the house is stupidly situated. It turns a cold shoulder on the grand broken coast; on the ten miles of sparkling sea on which the sun is showering millions of silver coins, ever a new shower as the last one disappears; on Rum, with a veil of haze on its highest peak; on the lyrical Cuchullins—for although of the rigidest granite, they always give one the idea of passion and tumult; on the wild headlands of Bracadale, fading one after another, dimmer and dimmer, into distance;—on all this the house turns a cold shoulder, and on a meadow on which some dozen colts are feeding, and on a low strip of moory hill beyond, from which the cotters draw their peats, it stares intently with all its doors and windows. Right about face. Attention! That done, the most fastidious could object to nothing at Orbost, on the point of beauty at least. The faces of the Skye people, continually set like flints against assaults of wind and rain, are all lined and puckered about the eyes; and in Skye houses you naturally wish to see something of the same weather-beaten look. Orbost, with its smooth front and unwinking windows, outrages the fitness of things.

Of the interior no one can complain; for on

entering you are at once surrounded by a proper antiquity and venerableness. The dining-room is large and somewhat insufficiently lighted, and on the walls hang two of Raeburn's half-lengths—the possession of which are in themselves vouchers of a family's respectability—and several portraits of ladies with obsolete waists and head-dresses, and military gentlemen in the uniform of last century. The furniture is dark and massy; the mahogany drawing depth and colour from age and usage; the carpet has been worn so bare that the pattern has become nearly obliterated. The room was not tidy, I was pleased to see. A small table placed near the window was covered with a litter of papers; in one corner were guns and fishing-rods, and a fishing-basket laid near them on the floor; and the round dusty mirror above the mantelpiece—which had the curious faculty of reducing your size, so that in its depth you saw yourself as it were at a considerable distance—had spills of paper stuck between its gilded frame and the wall. From these spills of paper I concluded that the house was the abode of a bachelor who occasionally smoked after dinner—which, indeed, was the case, only the master of the house was from home at the time of my visit. In the drawing-room, across the lobby, hooped ladies of Queen

Anne's time might have sat and drunk tea out of the tiniest china cups. The furniture was elegant, but it was the elegance of an ancient beau. The draperies were rich, but they had lost colour, like a spinster's cheek. In a corner stood a buffet with specimens of cracked china. Curious Indian ornaments, and a volume of Clarissa Harlowe, and another volume of the Poetical Works of Mr Alexander Pope—the binding faded, the paper dim—lay on the central table. Had the last reader left them there? They reminded me of the lute—it may be seen at this day in Pompeii—which the dancing girl flung down in an idle moment. In a dusky corner a piano stood open, but the ivory keys had grown yellow, and all richness of voice had been knocked out of them by the fingerings of dead girls. I touched them, and heard the metallic complaint of ill-usage, of old age, of utter loneliness and neglect. I thought of Ossian, and the flight of the dark-brown years. It was the first time they had spoken for long. The room, too, seemed to be pervaded by a scent of withered rose leaves, but whether this odour lived in the sense or the imagination, it would be useless to inquire.

Orbost lies pleasantly to the sun, and in the garden I could almost fancy Malvolio walking cross-gartered—so trim it was, so sunnily sedate, so for-

mal, so ancient-looking. The shadow on the dial told the age of the day, clipped box-wood ran along every walk. Trees, crucified to the warm brick walls, stretched out long arms on which fruit was ripening. The bee had stuck his head so deeply into a rose that he could hardly get it out again, and so with the leaves—as a millionaire with bank-notes—he impatiently buzzed and fidgeted. And then you were not without sharp senses of contrast: out of the sunny warmth and floral odours you lifted your eyes, and there were Macleod's Tables rising in an atmosphere of fable; and up in the wind above you, turning now and again its head in alert outlook, skimmed a snow-white gull, weary—as tailors sometimes are with sitting—of dancing on the surges of the sea.

Orbost stands high above the sea, and if you wish thoroughly to enjoy yourself you must walk down the avenue to the stone seat placed on the road which winds along the brow of the broken cliffs, and which, by many a curve and bend, reaches the water level at about a quarter of a mile's distance, where there is a boat-house, and boats lying keel uppermost or sideways, and a stretch of yellow sand on which the tide is flowing, creamy line after creamy line. From where you sit the ground breaks down first in a wall of cliff, then

in huge boulders as big as churches, thereafter in bushy broken ground with huts perched in the coziest places, each hut swathed in the loveliest films of blue smoke; and all through this broken ground there are narrow winding paths along which a cow is always being gingerly driven, or a wild Indian-looking girl is bringing water from some cool spring beneath. Here you can quietly enjoy the expanse of dazzling sea, a single sail breaking the restless scintillations; far Rum asleep on the silver floor; and, caught at a curious angle, the Cuchullin hills—reminding you of some stranded iceberg, splintered, riven, many-ridged, which the sun in all his centuries has been unable to melt. In the present light they have a curiously hoary look, and you can notice that in the higher corries there are long streaks of snow. On the right, beyond the boat-house, a great hill, dappled with brown and olive like a seal's back, and traversed here and there by rocky terraces, breaks in precipices down to the sea line; and between it and the hill on which you are sitting, and which slopes upward behind, you see the beginning of a deep glen, in its softness and greenness suggesting images of pastoral peace, the bringing home of rich pails by milkmaids, the lowing of cattle in sober ruddy sunsets. "What glen is that, Mal-

colm?" "Oh, sir, it just belongs to the farm." "Is there a house in it?" "No, but there's the ruins of a dozen." "How's that?" "Ye see, the old Macleods liked to keep their cousins and second cousins about them; and so Captain Macleod lived at the mouth of the glen, and Major Macleod at the top of it, and Colonel Macleod over the hill yonder. If the last trumpet had been blown at the end of the French war, no one but a Macleod would have risen out of the churchyard at Dunvegan. If you want to see a chief now-a-days, you must go to London for him. Ay, sir, Dun Kenneth's prophecy has come to pass—'In the days of Norman, son of the third Norman, there will be a noise in the doors of the people, and wailing in the house of the widow; and Macleod will not have so many gentlemen of his name as will row a five-oared boat around the Maidens!' The prophecy has come to pass, and the Tables are no longer Macleod's—at least one of them is not."

After wandering about Orbost we resumed our seats in the dog-cart, and drove to Dunvegan Castle.

As we drew near Dunvegan we came down on one of those sinuous sea-lochs which—hardly broader than a river—flow far inland, and carry

mysteriousness of sight and sound, the gliding sail, the sea-bird beating high against the wind, to the door of the shepherd, who is half a sailor among his bleating flocks. Across the sea, and almost within hail of your voice, a farm and outhouses looked embattled against the sky. Along the shore, as we drove, were boats and nets, and here and there little clumps and knots of houses. People were moving about on the roads intent on business. We passed a church, a merchant's store, a post-office; we were plainly approaching some village of importance; and on the right hand the chestnuts, larches, and ashes which filled every hollow, and covered every rolling slope, gave sufficient indication that we were approaching the castle.

In the centre of these woods we turned up a narrow road to the right along which ran a wall, and stopped at a narrow postern door. Here Malcolm rang a bell—the modern convenience grating somewhat on my preconceived notions of an approach to the old keep; if he had blown a horn I daresay I should have felt better satisfied —and in due time we were admitted by a trim damsel. The bell was bad, but the brilliant garden into which we stepped was worse—soft level lawns, a huge star of geraniums, surrounded at proper dis-

tances by half-moons and crescents of calceolarias rimmed with lobelias. The garden was circled by a large wall, against which fruit-trees were trained. In thinking of Dunvegan my mind had unconsciously become filled with desolate and Ossianic images, piled and hoary rocks, the thistle waving its beard in the wind, flakes of sea spray flying over all—and behold I rang a bell as if I were in Regent Street, and by a neat damsel was admitted into a garden that would have done no discredit to Kensington! After passing through the garden we entered upon a space of wild woodland, containing some fine timber, and romance began to revive. Malcolm then led me to an outhouse, and pointed out a carved stone above the doorway, on which were quartered the arms of the Macleods and Macdonalds. "Look there," said he, "Macleod has built the stone into his barn which should have been above his fire-place in his dining-room."

"I see the bull's head of Macleod and the galley of Macdonald—were the families in any way connected?"

"Oftener by a bloody dirk than by a gold marriage ring. But with all their quarrellings they intermarried more than once. Dunvegan was originally a stronghold of the Macdonald."

"Indeed! and how did the Macleods get possession?"

"I'll tell you that," said Malcolm. "Macdonald of Dunvegan had no son, but his only daughter was married to Macleod of Harris, and a young chief was growing up in Macleod's castle. The Macdonalds, knowing that when the old man was dead, they would have no one to lead them to battle, were pondering whom they should elect as chief; and, at the same time, Macleod's lady was just as anxiously pondering by what means her son should sit in Dunvegan. Well, while all this thinking and scheming was going on secretly in Skye and Harris, Macdonald, wishing to visit Macleod, ordered his barge and rowers to be in readiness, and pushed off. Macleod, hearing that his father-in-law was coming, went out in his barge to meet him half-way, and to escort him to his castle with all honour. Macleod's barge was bigger and stronger than Macdonald's, and held a greater number of rowers; and while his men were pulling, the chief sat in the stern steering, and his wife sat by his side. When they got into mid-channel a heavy mist came down, but still the men pulled, and still Macleod steered. All at once Macleod found that he was running straight on his father-in-law's barge, and just when he had his hand on the

helm to change the course and avoid striking, his wife gripped him hard and whispered in his ear, 'Macleod, Macleod, there's only that barge betwixt you and Dunvegan.' Macleod took the hint, steered straight on, struck and sunk Macdonald's barge in the mist, and sailed for Dunvegan, which he claimed in the name of his son. That is the way, as the old people tell, that Macleod came into possession here."

Then we strolled along the undulating paths, and at a sudden turn there was the ancient keep on its rock, a stream brawling down close at hand, the tide far withdrawn, the long shore heaped with dulse and tangle, and the sea-mews above the flag-staff, as the jackdaws fly above the cathedral towers in England. It was gray as the rock on which it stood—there were dark tapestries of ivy on the walls, but at a first glance it was disappointingly modern-looking. I thought of the mighty shell of Tantallon looking towards the Bass, and waving a matted beard of lichens in the sea wind, and began to draw disadvantageous comparisons. The feeling was foolishness, and on a better acquaintance with the building it wore off. Dunvegan is inhabited, and you cannot have well-aired sheets, a well-cooked dinner, and the vener-

ableness of ruin. Comfort and decay are never companions.

Dunvegan reminds one of a fragment of an old ballad, encumbered with a modern editor's introductory chapter, historical disquisitions, critical comments, explanatory and illustrative notes, and glossarial index. The dozen or so of rude stanzas —a whole remote passionate world dwelling in them as in some wizard's mirror—is by far the most valuable portion of the volume, although, in point of bulk, it bears no proportion to the subsidiary matter which has grown around it. Dunvegan is perhaps the oldest inhabited building in the country, but the ancient part is of small extent. One portion of it, it is said, was built in the ninth century. A tower was added in the fifteenth, another portion in the sixteenth, and the remainder by different hands, and at irregular intervals since then. No inconsiderable portion is unquestionably modern. The old part of the castle looks toward the sea, and entrance is obtained by a steep and narrow archway—up which, perhaps, came Macleod of Harris after he sunk the barge of his father-in-law in the misty Minch. In a crevice in the wall, which forms one side of this entrance, a well was recently discovered; it had

been built up—no man knows for how long—and when tasted, the water was found perfectly sweet and pure. In the old days of strife and broil it may have cooled many a throat thirsty with siege. The most modern portion of the building, I should fancy, is the present frontage, which, as you approach it by the bridge which solidly fills up the ravine, is not without a certain grandeur and nobility of aspect. The rock on which the castle stands is surrounded on three sides by the sea; and fine as the old pile looked at ebb of tide, one could fancy how much its appearance would be improved with all that far-stretching ugliness of sand and tangle obliterated, and the rock swathed with the azure and silence of ocean. To sleep in a bed-room at Dunvegan in such circumstances, must be like sleeping in a bed-room in fairy-land. You might hear a mermaid singing beneath your window, and looking out into the moonlight, behold, rising from the glistening swells, the perilous beauty of her breasts and hair.

After viewing the castle from various points, we boldly advanced across the bridge and rang the bell. After waiting some little time, we were admitted by a man who—the family at the time being from home—seemed the only person in pos-

session. He was extremely polite, volunteered to show us all over the place, and regretted that in the prolonged absence of his master the carpets and furniture in the "drawring-room" had been lifted. The familiar English *patois* sounded strange in the castle of a Macleod! On his invitation we entered an unfurnished hall with galleries running to left and right, and on the wooden balustrades of one of these galleries the great banner of Macleod was dispread—a huge white sheet on which the arms and legend of the house were worked in crimson. Going up stairs, we passed through spacious suites of rooms, carpetless, and with the furniture piled up in the centre and covered with an awning—through every window obtaining a glimpse of blue Loch and wild Skye headland. In most cases in the rooms the family pictures were left hanging, some fine, others sorry daubs enough, yet all interesting as suggesting the unbroken flow of generations. Here was Rory More, who was knighted in the reign of James VI. Here was the Macdonald lady, whose marriage with the Macleod of that day was the occasion of the arms of the families being united on the sculptured stone which we saw built above the door of the barn outside. Here was a haughty-looking young man of twenty-five, and yonder the same

man at sixty, grim, wrinkled, suspicious-looking—resembling the earlier portrait only in the pride of eye and lip. Here were Macleod beauties who married and became mothers in other houses; yonder were beauties from other castles who became mothers here, and grew gray-haired and died, leaving a reminiscence of their features in the family for a generation or two. Here was the wicked Macleod, yonder the spendthrift in whose hands the family wealth melted, and over there the brave soldier standing with outstretched arm, elephants and Indian temples forming an appropriate background. The rooms were spacious, every window affording a glorious sea view; but from their unfurnished and dismantled condition there arose a sort of Ossianic desolation, which comfortless as it must have been to a permanent dweller, did not fail to yield a certain gloomy pleasure to the imagination of the visitor of an hour.

Passing up and down stairs in the more ancient portion of the castle, the man in possession showed us the dungeons in which the Macleods immured their prisoners. I had fancied that these would have been scooped out of the rock on which the castle stood. Whether such existed I cannot say; but by candle-light I peered into more than one

stony closet let into the mighty wall—the entrance of which the garments of the lady must have swept every night as she went to bed—where the captured foemen of the family were confined. Perhaps the near contiguity of the prisoner, perhaps the sweeping of garments past the dungeon door, perhaps the chance-heard groan or clank of manacle, constituted the exquisite zest and flavour of revenge. Men keep their dearest treasures near them; and it might be that the neighbourhood of the wretch he hated—so near that the sound of revel could reach him at times—was more grateful to Macleod than his burial in some far-away vault, perhaps to be forgotten. Who knows! It is difficult to creep into the hearts of those old sea-kings. If I mistake not, one of the dungeons is at present used as a wine cellar. So the world and the fashion of it changes! Where the Macleod of three centuries ago kept his prisoner, the Macleod of to-day keeps his claret. From which of its uses the greatest amount of satisfaction has been derived would be a curious speculation.

By a narrow spiral stair we reached the most interesting apartment in Dunvegan—the Fairy Room, in which Sir Walter Scott slept once. This apartment is situated in the ancient portion of the

building, it overlooks the sea, and its walls are of enormous thickness. From its condition I should almost fancy that no one has slept there since Sir Walter's time. In it, at the period of my visit, there was neither bedstead nor chair, and it seemed a general lumber room. The walls were hung with rusty broadswords, dirks, targes, pistols, Indian helmets; and tunics of knitted steel were suspended on frames, but so rotten with age and neglect that a touch frayed them as if they had been woven of worsted. There were also curved scimitars, and curiously-hafted daggers, and two tattered regimental flags—that no doubt plunged through battle smoke in the front of charging lines —and these last I fancied had been brought home by the soldier whose portrait I had seen in one of the modern rooms. Moth-eaten volumes were scattered about amid a chaos of rusty weapons, cruses, and lamps. In one corner lay a huge oaken chest with a chain wound round it, but the lid was barely closed, and through the narrow aperture a roll of paper protruded docketed in clerkly hand and with faded ink—accounts of —— from 1715 till some time at the close of the century—in which doubtless some curious items were imbedded. On everything lay the dust and neglect of years. The room itself was steeped in a half twilight.

The merriest sunbeam became grave as it slanted across the corroded weapons in which there was no answering gleam. Cobwebs floated from the corners of the walls—the spiders which wove them having died long ago of sheer age. To my feeling it would be almost impossible to laugh in the haunted chamber, and if you did so you would be startled by a strange echo as if something mocked you. There was a grave-like odour in the apartment. You breathed dust and decay.

Seated on the wooden trunk round which the chain was wound, while Malcolm with his hand thrust in the hilt of a broadsword, was examining the notches on its blade, I inquired,

"Is there not a magic flag kept at Dunvegan? The flag was the gift of a fairy, if I remember the story rightly."

"Yes," said Malcolm, making a cut at an imaginary foeman, and then hanging the weapon up on the wall; "but it is kept in a glass case, and never shown to strangers, at least when the family is from home."

"How did Macleod come into possession of the flag, Malcolm?"

"Well, the old people say that one of the Macleods fell in love with a fairy, and used to meet her on the green hill out there. Macleod promised

to marry her; and one night the fairy gave him a green flag, telling him that, when either he or one of his race was in distress, the flag was to be waved, and relief would be certain. Three times the flag might be waved; but after the third time it might be thrown into the fire, for the power would have gone all out of it. I don't know, indeed, how it was, but Macleod deserted the fairy and married a woman."

"Is there anything astonishing in that? Would you not rather marry a woman than a fairy yourself."

"Maybe, if she was a rich one like the woman Macleod married," said Malcolm with a grin. "But when the fairy heard of the marriage she was in a great rage whatever. She cast a spell over Macleod's country, and all the women brought forth dead sons, and all the cows brought forth dead calves. Macleod was in great tribulation. He would soon have no young men to fight his battles, and his tenants would soon have no milk or cheese wherewith to pay their rents. The cry of his people came to him as he sat in his castle, and he waved the flag, and next day over the country there were living sons and living calves. Another time, in the front of a battle, he was sorely pressed, and nigh being beaten, but he waved the

flag again, and got the victory, and a great slaying of his enemies."

"Then the flag has not been waved for the third and last time?"

"No. At the time of the potato failure, when the people were starving in their cabins, it was thought that he should have waved it and stopped the rot. But the flag stayed in its case. Macleod can only wave it once now; and I'm sure he's like a man with his last guinea in his pocket—he does not like to spend it. But maybe, sir, you would like to climb up to the flag-staff and see the view."

We then left the haunted chamber, passed through the dismantled room in which the portraits hung, and ascended the narrow spiral stair—the walls of which, whether from sea damp, or from a peculiarity of the lime used in building, were covered with a glistering scurf of salt—and finally emerged on the battlemented plateau from which the flag-staff sprang. The huge mast had fallen a month or two previously, and was now spliced with rope and propped with billets of wood. A couple of days before the catastrophe, a young fellow from Cambridge, Malcolm told me, had climbed to the top—lucky for the young fellow it did not fall then, else he and Cambridge had parted company for

ever. From our airy perch the outlook was wonderfully magnificent. From the breast of the hill which shut out everything in one direction, there rolled down on the castle billow on billow of many-coloured foliage. The garden through which we had passed an hour before was but a speck of bright colour. The little toy village sent up its pillars of smoke. There was the brown stony beach, the boats, the ranges of nets, the sinuous snake-like Loch, and the dark far-stretching promontories asleep on the sleekness of summer sea. With what loveliness of shining blue the sea flowed in everywhere, carrying silence and the foreign-looking bird into inland solitudes, girdling with its glory the rock on which the chief's castle had stood for ten centuries, and at the door of the shepherd's shealing calling on the brown children with the voices of many wavelets, to come down and play with them on crescents of yellow sand!

Driving homeward I inquired, "Does the Laird live here much?" "No, indeed," said Malcolm; "he lives mainly in London."

And thereupon I thought how pleasant it must be for a man to escape from the hollow gusty castle with its fairy flag which has yet to be waved once, its dungeons, its haunted chambers, its large gaunt rooms, with portraits of men and women

from whom he has drawn his blood, its traditions of revenge and crime—and take up his abode in some villa at breezy Hampstead, or classic Twickenham, or even in some half-suburban residence in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park. The villa at Hampstead or Twickenham is neat and trim, and when you enter on residence, you enter without previous associations. It is probably not so old as yourself. The walls and rooms are strange, but you know that you and they will become pleasantly acquainted by and by. Dark family faces do not lower upon you out of the past; the air of the room in which you sit is not tainted with the smell of blood spilt hundreds of years ago. You and your dwelling are not the sole custodiers of dreadful secrets. The shadows of the fire-light on the twilight walls do not take shapes that daunt and affright. Your ancestors no longer tyrannise over you. You escape from the gloomy past, and live in the light and the voices of to-day. You are yourself—you are no longer a link in a blood-crusted chain. You enter upon the enjoyment of your individuality, as you enter upon the enjoyment of a newly-inherited estate. In modern London you drink nepenthe, and Dunvegan is forgotten. Were I the possessor of a haunted, worm-eaten castle, around which strange

stories float, I should fly from it as I would from a guilty conscience, and in the whirl of vivid life lose all thoughts of my ancestors. I should appeal to the present to protect me from the past. I should go into Parliament and study blue-books, and busy myself with the better regulation of alkali works, and the drainage of Stoke Pogis. No ancestor could touch me *then*.

"It's a strange old place, Dunvegan," said Malcolm, as we drove down by the Fairy Bridge, "and many strange things have happened in it. Did you ever hear, sir, how Macdonald of Sleat—Donald Gorm, or Blue Donald, as he was called—stayed a night with Macleod of Dunvegan at a time when there was feud between them?"

"No: but I shall be glad to hear the story now."

"Well," Malcolm went on, "on a stormy winter evening, when the walls of Dunvegan were wet with the rain of the cloud and the spray of the sea, Macleod, before he sat down to dinner, went out to have a look at the weather. 'A giant's night is coming on, my men,' he said when he came in, 'and if Macdonald of Sleat were at the foot of my rock seeking a night's shelter, I don't think I could refuse it.' He then sat down in the torch-light at the top of the long table, with his

gentlemen around him. When they were half through with their meal a man came in with the news that the barge of Macdonald of Sleat—which had been driven back by stress of weather on its way to Harris—was at the foot of the rock, and that Macdonald asked shelter for the night for himself and his men. 'They are welcome,' said Macleod; 'tell them to come in.' The man went away, and in a short time Macdonald, his piper, and his body guard of twelve, came in wet with the spray and rain, and weary with rowing. Now on the table there was a boar's head—which is always an omen of evil to a Macdonald—and noticing the dish, Donald Gorm with his men about him sat at the foot of the long table, beneath the salt, and away from Macleod and the gentlemen. Seeing this, Macleod made a place beside himself, and called out, 'Macdonald of Sleat, come and sit up here!' 'Thank you,' said Donald Gorm, 'I 'll remain where I am; but remember that wherever Macdonald of Sleat sits that's the head of the table.' So when dinner was over the gentlemen began to talk about their exploits in hunting, and their deeds in battle, and to show each other their dirks. Macleod showed his, which was very handsome, and it was passed down the long table from gentleman to gentleman, each one admiring it and handing it

to the next, till at last it came to Macdonald, who passed it on, saying nothing. Macleod noticed this, and called out, 'Why don't you show your dirk, Donald; I hear it's very fine?' Macdonald then drew his dirk, and holding it up in his right hand, called out, 'Here it is, Macleod of Dunvegan, and in the best hand for pushing it home in the four and twenty islands of the Hebrides.' Now Macleod was a strong man, but Macdonald was a stronger, and so Macleod could not call him a liar; but thinking he would be mentioned next, he said, 'And where is the next best hand for pushing a dirk home in the four and twenty islands?' '*Here*,' cried Donald Gorm, holding up his dirk in his left hand, and brandishing it in Macleod's face, who sat amongst his gentlemen biting his lips with vexation. So when it came to bed-time, Macleod told Macdonald that he had prepared a chamber for him near his own, and that he had placed fresh heather in a barn for the piper and the body guard of twelve. Macdonald thanked Macleod, but remembering the boar's head on the table, said he would go with his men, and that he preferred for his couch the fresh heather to the down of the swan. 'Please yourself, Macdonald of Sleat,' said Macleod, as he turned on his heel.

"Now it so happened that one of the body guard

of twelve had a sweetheart in the castle, but he had no opportunity of speaking to her. But once when she was passing the table with a dish she put her mouth to the man's ear and whispered, 'Bid your master beware of Macleod. The barn you sleep in will be red flame at midnight and ashes before the morning.' The words of the sweetheart passed the man's ear like a little breeze, but he kept the colour of his face, and looked as if he had heard nothing. So when Macdonald and his men got into the barn where the fresh heather had been spread for them to sleep on, he told the words which had been whispered in his ear. Donald Gorm then saw the trick that was being played, and led his men quietly out by the back door of the barn, down to a hollow rock which stood up against the wind, and there they sheltered themselves. By midnight the sea was red with the reflection of the burning barn, and morning broke on gray ashes and smouldering embers. The Macleods thought they had killed their enemies; but fancy their astonishment when Donald Gorm with his body guard of twelve marched past the castle down to the foot of the rock, where his barge was moored, with his piper playing in front—'Macleod, Macleod, Macleod of Dunvegan, I drove my dirk into your father's heart, and in payment of last

night's hospitality I'll drive it to the hilt in his son's yet.'"

"Macleod of Dunvegan must have been a great rascal," said I; "and I hope he got his deserts."

"I don't know, indeed," said Malcolm; "but if Donald Gorm caught him he could hardly miss." He then added, as if in deprecation of the idea that any portion of ignominy was attachable to him, "I am not one of the Dunvegan Macleods; I come from the Macleods of Raasay."

DUNTULM.

THE Landlord's house had been enveloped for several days in misty rain. It did not pour straight down, it did not patter on door and window, it had no action as it has in the south, —which made it all the more tormenting, for in action there is always some sort of exhilaration; in any case you have the notion that it will wear itself out soon, that "it is too hot work to last long, Hardy." An immense quantity of moisture was held in the atmosphere, and it descended in a soft, silent, imperceptible drizzle. It did not seem so very bad when you looked out on it from the window, but if you ventured on the gravel you were wet to the skin in a trice. White damp vapours lay low on the hills across the Loch; white damp vapours lay on the rising grounds where the sheep fed; white damp vapours hid the tops of the larches which sheltered the house from the south-west winds. Heaven was a wet blanket, and everything felt its influence. During the whole day Maida lay dreaming on the rug before

the fire. The melancholy parrot moped in its cage, and at intervals—for the sake of variety merely—attacked the lump of white sugar between the wires, or suspended itself, head downwards, and eyed you askance. The horses stamped and pawed in their stables. The drenched peacock, which but a few days before was never weary displaying his starry tail, read one a lesson on the instability of human glory. The desolate sea lapping the weedy piers of Tyre; Napoleon at St Helena, his innumerable armies, the thunders of his cannon that made capitals pale, faded away, perished utterly like a last year's dream, could not have been more impressive. It sat on the garden seat, a mere lump of draggled feathers, and as gray as a hedge-sparrow. The Landlord shut himself up in his own room, writing letters against the departure of the Indian mail. We read novels, and yawned, and made each other miserable with attempts at conversation—and still the clouds hung low on hill, and rising ground, and large plantation, like surcharged sponges; and still the drizzle came down mercilessly, noiselessly, until the world was sodden, and was rapidly becoming sponge-like too.

On the fourth day we went upstairs, threw ourselves on our beds dead beat, and fell asleep, till we were roused by the gong for dinner. Thrust-

ing my face hurriedly into a basin of cold water, tidying dishevelled locks, I got down when the soup was being taken away, and was a good deal laughed at. Somehow the spirits of the party seemed lighter; the despotism of rain did not weigh so heavily on them; I felt almost sportively inclined myself; and just at the conclusion of dessert, when wine had circulated once or twice, there was a flush of rosy light on the panes. I went at once to the window, and there was the sun raying out great lances of splendour, and armies of fiery mists lifting from the hills and streaming upwards, glorious as seraph bands, or the transfigured spirits of martyrdom. The westward-ebbing loch was sleek gold, the wet trees twinkled, every puddle was sun-gilt. I looked at the barometer and saw the mercury rising like hope in a man's breast when fortune smiles on him. The curtains were drawn back to let the red light fully into the room. "I like to see that fiery smoke on the hills," said the Landlord, "it's always a sign of fine weather setting in. Now it won't do for you fellows to lie up here like beached boats doing nothing. You must be off after tiffin to-morrow. I'll give you letters of introduction, a dog-cart and a man, and in a week or so come back and tell me what you think of Duntulm and Quirang. You

must rough it you know. You mustn't be afraid of a shower, or of getting your feet wetted in a bog."

And so next day after tiffin the Landlord sent us off into the wilds, as a falconer might toss his hawk into the air.

The day was fine, the heat was tempered by a pleasant breeze, great white clouds swam in the blue void, and every now and again a shower came racing across our path with a sunbeam at its heel. We drove past the village, past the huts that ran along the top of the cultivated hill-side, dropped down on Skeabost, and the stream with the island of graves, and in due time reached the solitary school-house at the junction of the roads. Turning to the left here, we drove along the east shore of Loch Snizort, up stages of easy ascent, and then, some four or five miles on, left the Parliamentary Road and descended on Kingsburgh. I pointed out to Fellowes the ruins of the old house, spoke to him of the Prince, Flora Macdonald, Dr Johnson, and Boswell. After sauntering about there for a quarter of an hour, we walked down to the present house with its gables draped with ivies, and its pleasant doors and windows scented with roses and honey-suckles. To the gentleman who then occupied the farm we

bore a letter from the Landlord, but, on inquiring, found that he had gone south on business a couple of days previously. This gentleman was a bachelor, the house was tenanted by servants only, and of course at Kingsburgh we could not remain. This was a disappointment; and as we walked back to the dog-cart, I told my companion of a pleasant ten days I had wasted there three or four summers since. I spoke to him of the Kingsburgh of that time—the kindly generous Christian Highland gentleman; of his open door and frank greeting, warm and hospitable; of his Christianity, as open and hospitable as his door; of the plenteous meats and drinks, and the household pieties which ever seemed to ask a blessing. I spoke of the pleasant family, so numerous, so varied; the grandmother, made prisoner to an easy-chair, yet never fretful, never morose; who, on the lip of ninety, wore the smile of twenty-five; who could look up from her Bible—with which she was familiar as with the way to her bedroom—to listen to the news of the moment, and to feel interested in it; who, with the light of the golden city in her eyes, could listen and enter into a girl's trouble about her white frock and her first dance. There is nothing *keeps* so well as a good heart; nothing which time sweetens so to the core. I spoke of

Kingsburgh himself, guileless, chivalrous, hospitable; of his sisters, one a widow, one a spinster; of his brave soldier nephew from India; of his pretty nieces, with their English voices and their English wild-rose bloom—who loved the heather and the mist, and the blue Loch with the gulls sweeping over it, but *him* most of all; of his sons, deep in the Gorilla Book, and to whose stories, and the history of whose adventures and exploits grandmamma's ears were ever open. I spoke too of the guests that came and went during my stay—the soldier, the artist, the mysterious man, who, so far as any of us knew, had neither name, occupation, nor country, who was without parents and antecedents—who was himself alone; of the games of croquet on the sunny lawn, of the pic-nics and excursions, of the books read in the cool twilight of the moss-house, of the smoking parliament held in the stables on rainy days, of the quiet cigar in the open air before going to bed. 'Twas the pleasantest fortnight I ever remember to have spent; and before I had finished telling my companion all about it we had taken our seats in the dog-cart, and were pretty well advanced on the way to Uig.

Uig is distant from Kingsburgh about five miles; the road is high above the sea, and as you drive along you behold the northern headlands of Skye,

the wide blue Minch, and Harris, rising like a cloud on the horizon; and if the day is fine, you will enjoy the commerce of sea and sky, the innumerable tints thrown by the clouds on the watery mirror, the mat of glittering light spread beneath the sun, the gray lines of showers on the distant promontories, the tracks of air currents on the mobile element between. The clouds pass from shape to shape—what resembles a dragon one moment resembles something else the next; the promontory which was obscure ten minutes ago is now yellow-green in sunlight; the watery pavement is tesselated with hues, but with hues that continually shift and change. In the vast outlook there is utter silence, but no rest. What with swimming vapour, passing Proteus-like from form to form—obscure showers that run—vagrant impulses of wind — sunbeams that gild and die in gilding—the vast impressionable mimetic floor outspread,—the sight you behold when you toil up the steep road from Kingsburgh to Uig is full of motion. There is no rest in nature, they say; and the clouds are changing like opinions and kingdoms, and the bodies and souls of men. Matter is a stream that flows, a fire that burns. By a cunninger chemistry than ours, the atoms

that composed the body of Adam could be arrested somewhere yet.

Just when you have reached the highest part of the road you come in view of the Bay of Uig. You are high above it as you drive or walk along, the ground is equally high on the other side, and about the distance of a mile inland, on a great sandy beach, the tide is rolling in long white lines that chase each other. On the deep water outside the tidal lines a yacht is rocking; there is a mansion-house with a flag-staff on the shore, and at the top of the bay are several houses, a church, and a school-house, built of comfortable stone and lime. When the Minch is angry outside, washing the headlands with spray, Uig is the refuge which the fisherman and the coaster seek. When once they have entered its rocky portals they are safe. The road now descends towards the shore; there is an inn midway, low-roofed, dimly-lighted, covered with thatch—on the whole perhaps the most unpromising edifice in the neighbourhood. Here we pulled up. Already we had driven some twenty-five miles, and as we wished to push on to Duntulm that evening, we were anxious to procure a fresh horse. The keen air had whetted our appetites, and we were eager for dinner, or what substitute for dinner could be provided. Our driver un-

harnessed the horse, and we entered a little room, spotlessly clean, however, and knocked with our knuckles on the deal table. When the red-haired handmaiden entered, we discovered that the Uig bill of fare consisted of bread and butter, cheese, whisky, milk, and hard-boiled eggs—and a very satisfactory bill of fare we considered it too. There is no such condiment as hunger honourably earned by exercise in the open air. When the viands were placed before us we attacked them manfully. The bread and butter disappeared, the hard-boiled eggs disappeared, we flinched not before the slices of goats'-milk cheese ; then we made equal division of the whisky, poured it into bowls of milk, and drank with relish. While in the middle of the feast the landlord entered—he wore the kilt, the only person almost whom I had seen wearing it in my sojourn in the island—to make arrangements relative to the fresh horse. He admitted that he possessed an animal, but as he possessed a gig and eke a driver, it was his opinion that the three should go together. To this we objected, stating that as we already had a vehicle and a driver, and as they were in no wise tired, such a change as he suggested would be needless. We told him also that we meant to remain at Duntulm for one night only, and that by noon of

the following day we would be back at his hostelry with his horse. The landlord seemed somewhat moved by our representations, and just when victory was hanging in the balance the brilliant idea struck my companion that he should be bribed with his own whisky. At the rap on the deal table the red-haired wench appeared, the order was given, and in a trice a jorum of mountain dew was produced. This decided matters, the landlord laid down the arms of argument, and after we had solemnly drunk each other's health he went out for the fresh horse, and in a quarter of an hour we were all right, and slowly descending the steep hill-road to Uig.

We drove through the village, where a good deal of building seemed going on, and then began to climb the hill-road that rose beyond it. Along the hill-side this road zig-zagged in such a curious manner, ran in such terraces and parallel lines, that the dog-cart immediately beneath you, and into which you could almost chuck a biscuit—the one machine heading east the other west—would take ten minutes before it reached the point to which you had obtained. At last we reached the top of the wavy ascent, passed through a mile or two of moory wilderness, in which we met a long string of women bringing home creels of peats, and then in

the early sunset descended the long hill-side which led to Kilmuir. Driving along we had Mugstot pointed out to us—a plain white dwelling on our left in which Macdonald lived after he had vacated Duntulm, and while Armadale was yet building. About this place, too, the Parliamentary Road stopped. No longer could we drive along smoothly as on an English turnpike. The pathway now was narrow and stony, and the dog-cart bumped and jolted in a most distressing manner. During the last hour, too, the scenery had changed its character. We were no longer descending a hill-side on which the afternoon sun shone pleasantly. Our path still lay along the sea, but above us were high cliffs with great boulders lying at their feet; beneath us, and sloping down to the sea level, boulders lay piled on each other, and against these the making tide seethed and fretted. The sun was setting on the Minch, and the irregular purple outline of Harris was distinctly visible on the horizon. For some time back we had seen no house, nor had our path been crossed by a single human being. The solitariness and desolation of the scenery affected one. Everything around was unfamiliar and portentous. The road on which we drove was like a road in the "Faery Queen," along which a knight, the sunset dancing on his armour, might prick in

search of perilous adventure. The chin of the sun now rested on the Minch, the overhanging cliffs were rosy, and the rocky road began to seem interminable. At last there was a sudden turn, and there, on a little promontory, with shattered wall and loophole against the red light, stood Duntulm —the castle of all others that I most wished to see.

Going down the rocky road, the uncomfortable idea crept into our minds that Duntulm, to whom we bore a letter of introduction from the Landlord, might—like the owner of Kingsburgh —have gone to the south on business. We could hardly have returned to Uig that night, and this thought made yet more rigid the wall of rosy cliff above us, and yet more dreary the seethe of the Minch amongst the broken boulders beneath. As suspense was worse than certainty, we urged on the Uig horse, and in a short time, with the broken castle behind us, drew up at the house. Duntulm had seen us coming, and when we alighted he was at the door, his face hospitable as a fire in winter time, and his outstretched hand the best evidence of good wishes. In a moment the bald red cliffs and the homeless seething of the Minch among the broken stones faded out of my memory. We mentioned our names, and proffered the letter of introduction. "There is no need," said he, as

he thrust the epistle into his pocket, "civility before ceremony. Having come you are of course my guests. Come in. The letter will tell me who you are soon enough." And so we were carried into the little parlour till our bedrooms were got ready, and then we went up-stairs, washed our hands and faces, changed our clothes, and came down for tea. When we entered the parlour, the tea-urn was hissing on the table, and with our host sat a photographer—bearded as all artists at the present day are—who had been engaged during the afternoon on Flora Macdonald's grave.

When tea was over we were carried into another room where were materials placed for the brewing of punch. Through the window I beheld spectral castle, the sea on which the light was dying, the purple fringe of Harris on the horizon. And seated there, in the remotest corner of Skye, amongst people whom I had never before seen, girt by walls of cliffs and the sounding sea, in a region, too, in which there was no proper night, I confess to have been conscious of a pleasant feeling of strangeness, of removal from all customary conditions of thought and locality, which I like at times to recall and enjoy over again. Into this feeling the strange country through which I had that day driven, the strange room in which I sat,

the strange faces surrounding me, the strange talk, all entered ; yet I am almost certain that it was heightened to no inconsiderable extent by the peculiar spirit bottle on the table. This bottle was pale green in colour, was composed of two hollow hemispheres like a sand-glass, the mouth-piece surmounting the upper hemisphere of course ; and from the upper hemisphere to the lower sprang four hollow arms, through which the liquor coursed, giving the bottle a curiously square appearance. I had never seen such a bottle before, and I suppose till I go back to Duntulm I am not likely to see its like. Its shape was peculiar, and that peculiarity dove-tailed into the peculiarity of everything else. We sat there till the light had died out on the sea, and the cloud had come down on Harris, and then the candles were brought in.

But the broken tower of Duntulm still abode in my memory, and I began to make inquiries concerning it. I was told that it was long the seat of the Macdonalds, but that after the family had been driven out of it by the ghost of Donald Gorm, they removed to Mugstot. "Donald Gorm!" I said ; "were they driven out by the restless spirit of the Donald who flouted Macleod at his own table at Dunvegan—who, when he was asked to show his dirk, held it up in the torch-light in the

face of Macleod and of his gentlemen, with the exclamation, 'Here it is, Macleod of Dunvegan, and in the best hand for pushing it home in the four and twenty islands of the Hebrides?'" "They were driven away by the spirit of the same Donald," said our host. "That chieftain had been stricken by a lingering yet mortal illness, and removed to Edinburgh, and placed himself under the care of the leeches there. His body lay on a sick-bed in Edinburgh, but his spirit roamed about the passages and galleries of the castle. The people heard the noises, and the slamming of doors, and the waving of tartans on the staircases, and did not know that it was the spirit of their sick master that troubled them. It was found out, however. The servants were frightened out of their wits by the unearthly voices, and the sounds of weeping, the waving of shadowy tartans, and the wringing of shadowy hands, and declared that they would no longer abide in the castle. At last a young man, from Kilmuir over there, said that if they would provide him with a sword and a Bible, and plenty to eat and drink, he would sit up in the hall all night and speak to the apparition. His offer was accepted, and he sat down to supper in the great hall with his sword drawn and his Bible open on the table before him. At midnight he

heard doors open and close, and the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and before he knew where he was there was Donald Gorm, dressed in tartan as if for feast or battle, standing on the floor and looking at him. 'What do you want with me, Donald?' said the young man. 'I was in Edinburgh last night,' said the spirit, 'and I am in my own castle to-night. Don't be afraid, man; there is more force in the little pebble which you chuck away from you with your finger and thumb than there is in my entire body of strength. Tell Donald Gorm Og—("Donald's son, you know," interpolated the photographer)—tell Donald Gorm Og to stand up for the right against might, to be generous to the multitude, to have a charitable hand stretched out to the poor. Woe's me! woe's me! I have spoken to a mortal, and must leave the castle to-night,' and so the ghost of Donald vanished, and the young man was left sitting in the hall alone. Donald died in Edinburgh and was buried there; but after his death, as during his life, his spirit walked about here until the family was compelled to leave. It was a fine place once, but it has been crumbling away year by year, and is now broken and hollow like a witch's tooth. The story I have told you is devoutly believed by all the fishermen, herdsmen, and milkmaids in the neighbourhood. I

think Mr Maciver, the clergyman at Kilmuir, is the only person in the neighbourhood who has no faith in it." This ghost story the photographer capped by another, and when that was finished we went to bed.

Next morning we went out to inspect the old castle, and found it a mere shell. Compared with its appearance the night before, when it stood in relief against the red sky, it was strangely unimpressive; a fragment of a tower and a portion of flanking wall stood erect; there were traces of building down on the slope near the sea, but all the rest was a mere rubble of fallen masonry. It had been despoiled in every way; the elements had worn and battered it, the people of the district had for years back made it a quarry, and built out of it dwellings, out-houses, and dikes—making the past serve the purposes of the present. Sheep destined for the London market were cropping the herbage around its base—suggesting curious comparisons, and bringing into keener contrast antiquity and to-day. While we were loitering about the ruins the photographer came up, and under his guidance we went to visit Kilmuir churchyard, in which Flora Macdonald rests. We went along the stony road down which we had driven the night previously—the cliffs lately so rosy, gray enough now,

and the seethe of the fresh sea amongst the boulders and shingle beneath rather exhilarating than otherwise. After a walk of about a couple of miles we left the road, climbed up a grassy ascent, and found the churchyard there, enclosed by a low stone wall. Everything was in hideous disrepair. The gate was open, the tomb-stones were broken and defaced, and above the grave of the heroine nettles were growing more luxuriously than any crop I had yet had the good fortune to behold in the island. Skye has only one historical grave to dress—and she leaves it *so*. On expressing our surprise to the photographer, he told us that a London sculptor passing that way, and whose heart burned within him at the sight, had offered at several dinner-tables in the district to execute a bronze medallion of the famous lady, gratis, provided his guests would undertake to have it properly placed, and to a have fitting inscription carved upon the pedestal. "The proposal was made, I know," said the photographer, "for the sculptor told me about it himself. His proposal has not been taken up, nor is it likely to be taken up now. The country which treats the grave of a heroine after that fashion is not worthy to have a heroine. Still,"—he went eyeing the place critically, with his head a little to one side—"it

makes a picturesque photograph as it stands—perhaps better than if it were neat and tidy." We plucked a nettle from the grave and then returned to Duntulm to breakfast.

Shortly after breakfast our dog-cart was at the door, and followed by Duntulm and the photographer in a similar machine, we were on our way to Quirang. A drive of a couple of hours brought us to the base of the singular mountain. Tilting our vehicles, leaving the horses to roam about picking the short grass, and carrying with us materials for luncheon on the crest, we began the ascent. The day was fine, the sky cloudless, and in an hour we were toiling past the rocky spire of the needle, and in fifteen minutes thereafter, we reached the flat green plateau on the top. Here we lunched and sang songs, and made mock heroic speeches in proposing each other's health. I had ascended the Quirang before in rain, and wind, and vapour, and could hardly recognise it now under the different atmospherical conditions. Then every stone was slippery, every runnel a torrent, the top of the needle lost in the flying mist, everything looking spectral, weird, and abnormal. On the present occasion, we saw it in fair sunlight; and what the basalt columns, the shattered precipices, the projecting spiry rocks lost in terror they gained in beauty.

Reclining on the soft green grass—strange to find grass so girdled by fantastic crags—we had, through fissures and the rents of ancient earthquake, the loveliest peeps of the map-like under world swathed in faint sea azure. An hour, perhaps, we lay there; and then began the long descent. When we reached the dog-carts we exchanged a parting cup, and then Duntulm and the photographer returned home, and we hied on to Uig.

Arriving at Uig we dined—the bill of fare identical with that on the preceding day; the hard-boiled eggs, only a shade harder boiled perhaps; and then having settled with the kilted landlord—the charge wondrously moderate—we got out our own horse, and with the setting sun making splendid the Minch behind us, we started for Portree. It was eleven P.M. before we reached the little town, the moon was shining clearly, a stray candle or two twinkling in the houses, and when we reached the hotel door the building was lighted up—it had been a fair day, the prices for cattle were good, and over whisky punch farmer and drover were fraternising.

Next morning, in the soft sky was the wild outline of the Cuchullins, with which we were again to make acquaintance. Somehow these hills never weary, you never become familiar

with them, intimacy can no more stale them than it could the beauty of Cleopatra. From the hotel door I regarded them with as much interest as when, from the deck of the steamer off Ardnamurchan ten years ago, I first beheld them with their clouds on the horizon. While at breakfast in the public room, farmer and drover dropped in—the more fiery-throated drinking pale ale instead of tea. After breakfast we were again in the dog-cart driving leisurely toward Sligachan—the wonderful mountains beyond gradually losing tenderness of morning hue and growing worn and hoary, standing with sharper edges against the light, becoming rough with rocky knob and buttress, and grayly wrinkled with ravines. When we reached the inn we found it full of company, bells continually jangling, half a dozen machines at the door, and a party of gentlemen in knickerbockers starting with rods and fishing-baskets. Here we returned the dog-cart to the landlord, and began to address ourselves to the desolate glen stretching between the inn and Camasunary.

In Glen Sligachan, although you lose sight of the Cuchullins proper, you are surrounded by their outlying and far-radiating spurs. The glen is some eight miles in length, and is wild and desolate beyond conception. Walking along, too, the re-

ticulations of the hills are picked out with that pale greenish tint, which I had noted as characteristic of the hills seen from Lord Macdonald's deer forest, and which gives one the idea of the overflow of chemical fluids, of metallic corrosions and discolorations. There is no proper path, and you walk in the loose *débris* of torrents; and in Glen Sligachan, as in many other parts of Skye, the scenery curiously repels you, and drives you in on yourself. You have a quickened sense of your own individuality. The enormous bulks, their gradual recedings to invisible crests, their utter movelessness, their austere silence, daunt you. You are conscious of their presence, and you hardly care to speak lest you be overheard. You can't laugh. You would not crack a joke for the world. Glen Sligachan would be the place to do a little bit of self-examination in. There you would have a sense of your own meannesses, selfishnesses, paltry evasions of truth and duty, and find out what a shabby fellow you at heart are—and looking up to your silent father-confessors, you would find no mercy in their grim faces. I do not know what effect mountains have on the people who live habitually amongst them, but the stranger they make serious and grave at heart. Through this glen we trudged silently enough, and when two-

thirds of the distance had been accomplished, it was with a feeling of relief that a lake was descried ahead. The sight of anything mobile, of an element that could glitter and dimple and dance, took away from the sense of the stony eternities, gray and wrinkled as with the traces of long-forgotten passion, listening for ever, dumb for ever. After rounding the lake, which plashed merrily on its margin, and clambering over a long waste of boulder, we saw as we ascended a low flank of Blaavin, the Bay of Camasunary, the house, and the very boat which M'Ian had borrowed on the day we went to visit Loch Coruisk, below us. The tobacco-less man was nowhere visible, and I marvelled whether his messenger had yet returned from Broadford.

When we got to the top of the hill we had to descend the slope to Kilmaree; and as on my return from Loch Coruisk I had come down pleasantly under the guidance of M'Ian, I fancied, naturally enough, that I could act as guide on the present occasion. But there is a knack in descending hills as there is in everything else. First of all, I lost the narrow footpath at the top; then as we were bound to reach Loch Eishart, and as Loch Eishart lay below us distinctly visible, I led directly for it; but somehow we were getting continu-

ally on the wrong bank of a pestilent stream, which, through chasm and ravine, found its way to the sea by apparently the most circuitous of courses. This stream we forded a dozen times at the least, and sometimes in imminent danger of a ducking. It was now late in the afternoon, and the weather had changed. The tops of the hills began to be lost in mist, and long lines of sea fog to creep along the lower grounds. There was at intervals a slow drizzle of rain. Fetching a cunning circuit, as I supposed, we found the inevitable stream again in our front, and got across it with difficulty —happily for the last time. After we had proceeded about a hundred yards we came upon the lost pathway, and in fifteen minutes thereafter we were standing upon the shore of the Loch watching the flying scud of Atlantic mist, and the green waves rolling underneath with their white caps on.

The question now arose—By what means could we reach Mr M'Ian? There was no ferry at Kilmaree, but sundry boats were drawn up on the shore, and a couple were bobbing on the restless water at the stony pier. There were the boats certainly enough, but where were the boatmen? In the neighbourhood men could surely be obtained who, for a consideration, would take us across. We

directed our steps to the lodge at Kilmaree, which seemed untenanted, and after some little trouble penetrated into the region of the offices and out-houses. Here we found a couple of men chopping sticks, and to them my companion—who as a man of business and learned in the law was the spokesman on such occasions—addressed himself. "You want to go over to Mr M'Ian's to-night?" said the elder, desisting from his task, and standing up with his axe in his hand. "Yes, we are particularly anxious to get across. Can you take us?" "I don't know; you see we are no ferrymen, an' if we take you across we must leave our work." "Of course you must; but we'll pay you for your trouble." Here the two men exchanged a sentence or two of Gaelic, and then the elder wood-chopper asked, "Do you know Mr M'Ian?" "Oh, yes, we know him very well." "Does he expect you this night?" "No; but we are anxious to see him, and he will be glad to see us." "I'm no sure we can take you across," said the man hesitatingly; "you see the master is from home, an' the wind is rising, an' we're no ferrymen, an' we'll need to borrow a boat, an'"—here he hesitated still more—"it would cost you something." "Of course it will. What will you expect." "Wad you think ten shillings too much?"

"No, we'll give you ten shillings," said Fellowes, clinching the bargain. "And," said I, coming in like a swift charge of lancers on a half-disorganised battalion, and making victory complete, "we'll give you a glass of spirits at the house, too, when you get across." The men then threw down their axes, put on their jackets, which hung on nails on the walls, and talking busily in Gaelic, led the way to the little stony pier where the boats were moored.

"There's a gale rising," said one of the men, as he pulled in a boat to the pier by a rope, "an' it'll no be easy taking you across, and still harder to get back ourselves." As, however, to this expression of opinion we made no response, the men busied themselves with getting the boat to rights, testing the rollock pins, rolling in stones for ballast, examining the sail and ropes, and such like matters. In a short time we took our seats, and then the men pulled slowly out to sea in the opposite direction from Mr M'Ian's house, in order to catch the wind, which was blowing freshly inland. The course of the boat was then changed, the oars shipped, the sail shaken out, and away we went through the green seas with long lurches, the foam gathering up high at the bows, hissing along the sides, and forming a long white wake behind. The elder man sat with the rope of the sail in his hand,

and taking a shrewd squint at the weather at intervals. When not so engaged, he was disposed to be talkative. "He's a fine gentleman, Mr M'Ian, a vera fine gentleman; an' vera good to the poor." "I understand," I said, "that he is the most generous of mankind." "He is that; he never lets a poor man go past his door without a meal. Maybe, sir, ye'll be a friend o' his?" "Yes, both of us are friends of his, and friends of his son's too." "Maybe ye'll be a relation of his?—he has many relations in the south country." "No," I said, "no relation, only a friend. Do you smoke?" "Oh, yes, but I have forgot my spleuchan." "I can provide you with tobacco," I said, and so when his pipe was lighted he became silent.

We were now two-thirds across, and the white watery mists hung low on the familiar coast as we approached. Gradually the well-known objects became defined in the evening light—the clumps of birch-wood, the huts seated on the shore, the house, the cliffs behind on which the clouds lay half-way down. When we drew near the stony quay we noticed that we were the subjects of considerable speculation. It was but seldom that a boat stood across from the Strathaird coast, and by our glass we could see a group of the men-servants standing at the corner of the black kitchen

watching our movements, and Mr M'Ian himself coming out with his telescope. When the keel grated on the pebbles we got out. "Now, my men," said Fellowes, "come up to the house and have your promised glass of spirits!" To our astonishment the men declined; they could not wait, they were going back immediately. "But you must come," said my companion, who acted as purser, "for before I can pay you I must get Mr M'Ian to change me a sovereign. Come along." We climbed up to the house, and were welcomed by Mr M'Ian, father and son, in the ivy-covered porch. "By the way," said Fellowes, "I wish you to change me a sovereign, as we have ten shillings to pay these men." "Did the scoundrels charge that sum for bringing you over? It 's extortion; five shillings is quite enough. Let me go and speak to them." "But," remonstrated Fellowes, "we don't consider the charge immoderate: we made the bargain with them: and so anxious were we to be here that we would willingly have paid them double." "Don't talk to me," cried M'Ian, as he put on his hat and seized his stick. "Why, you rascals, did you charge these gentlemen ten shillings for taking them across the Loch? You know you are well enough paid if you get half." "Sir," said the elder man respectfully, while both touched

their bonnets, "we'll just take what you please; just anything you like, Mr M'Ian." "Don't you see the mischief you do and the discredit you bring on the country by this kind of thing? Every summer the big lying blackguard *Times* is crammed with complaints of tourists who have been cheated by you and the like of you—although I don't believe half the stories. These fools"—here the old gentleman made reference to us by a rapid backward chuck of his thumb—"may go home to the south and write to the newspapers about you." "The bargain the gentlemen made was ten shillings," said the man, "but if you think we have asked too much we'll take six. But it's for your sake we'll take it, not for theirs." "They're honest fellows these," cried the old gentleman, as he poured the coins into the palm of the elder man; "Alick, bring them out a dram." The dram, prefaced by a word or two of Gaelic, to which Mr M'Ian nodded, was duly swallowed, and the men, touching their bonnets, descended to their boat. The old gentleman led the way into the house, and we had no sooner reached the porch than my companion remembered that he had left something, and ran down to fetch it. He returned in a little while, and in the course of the evening he gave me to understand that he had

seen the boatmen, and fully implemented his promise.

The wind had changed during the night, and next morning broke forth gloriously—not a speck of vapour on the Cuchullins; the long stretch of Strathaird wonderfully distinct; the Loch bright in sunlight. When we got down to breakfast we found Mr M'Ian alone. His son, he said, had been on the hill since four o'clock in the morning gathering the lambs together, and that about noon he and his assistants would be branding them at the fank. When breakfast was over,—Fellowes, having letters to write, remained in-doors,—I and the old gentleman went out. We went up the glen, and as we drew near the fank we saw a number of men standing about, their plaids thrown on the turfen walls, with sheep-dogs couched thereupon; a thick column of peat-smoke rising up, smelt easily at the distance of half a mile; no sheep were visible, but the air was filled with bleatings,—undulating with the clear plaintive trebles of innumerable ewes, and the hoarser *baa* of tups. When we arrived we found the narrow chambers and compartments at one end of the fank crowded with lambs, so closely wedged together that they could hardly move, and between these chambers and compartments temporary barriers erected, so

that no animal could pass from one to the other. The shepherds must have had severe work of it that morning. It was as yet only eleven o'clock, and since early dawn they and their dogs had coursed over an area of ten miles, sweeping every hill face, visiting every glen, and driving down rills of sheep toward this central spot. Having got the animals down, the business of assortment began. The most perfect ewes—destined to be the mothers of the next brood of lambs on the farm—were placed in one chamber; the second best, whose fate it was to be sold at Inverness, were placed in a congeries of compartments, the one opening into the other; the inferior qualities—*shots*, as they are technically called—occupied a place by themselves: these also to be sold at Inverness, but at lower prices than the others. The fank is a large square enclosure; the compartments into which the bleating flocks were huddled occupied about one half of the walled-in space, the remainder being perfectly vacant. One of the compartments opened into this space, but a temporary barrier prevented all egress. Just at the mouth of this barrier we could see the white ashes and the dull orange glow of the peat-fire in which some half-dozen branding irons were heating. When everything was prepared two or three men entered

into this open space. One took his seat on a large smooth stone by the side of the peat-fire, a second vaulted into the struggling mass of heads and fleeces, a third opened the barrier slightly, lugged out a struggling lamb by the horns, and consigned it to the care of the man seated on the smooth stone. This worthy got the animal dexterously between his legs, so that it was unable to struggle, laid its head down on his thigh, seized from the orange glow of the smouldering peat-fire one of the red-hot heating irons, and with a hiss, and a slight curl of smoke, drew it in a diagonal direction across its nose. Before the animal was sufficiently branded the iron had to be applied twice or thrice. It was then released, and trotted bleating into the open space, perhaps making a curious bound on the way as if in bravado, or shaking its head hurriedly as if snuff had been thrown into its eyes. All day this branding goes on. The peat-fire is replenished when needed; another man takes his seat on the smooth stone; by two o'clock a string of women bring up dinner from the house, and all the while, young M'Ian sits on the turfen wall, note-book in hand, setting down the number of the lambs and their respective qualities. Every farmer has his own peculiar brand, and by it he can identify a member

of his stock if it should go astray. The brand is to the farmer what a trade mark is to a manufacturer. These brands are familiar to the drovers even as the brands of wine and cigars are familiar to the connoisseurs in these articles. The operation looks a cruel one, but it is not perfectly clear that the sheep suffer much under it. While under the iron they are perfectly quiet,—they neither bleat nor struggle, and when they get off they make no sign of discomfort save the high bound or the restless shake of the head already mentioned—if indeed these are signs of discomfort—a conclusion which no sheep farmer will in anywise allow. In a minute or so they are cropping herbage in the open space of the fank, or if the day is warm, lying down in the cool shadows of the walls as composedly as if nothing had happened.

Leaning against the fank walls we looked on for about an hour, by which time a couple of hundred lambs had been branded, and then we went up the glen to inspect a mare and foal of which Mr M'Ian was specially proud. Returning in the direction of the house, the old gentleman pointed out what trenching had been done, what walls had been built in my absence, and showed me on the other side of the stream what brushwood he meant to clear next spring for potatoes, what fields he would give to the people for their crops, what fields he

would reserve for his own use. Flowing on in this way with scheme and petty detail of farm work, he suddenly turned round on me with a queer look in his face. "Isn't it odd that a fellow like me, standing on the brink of the grave, should go pottering about day after day thinking of turnips and oats, tups and ewes, cows and foals? The chances are that the oats I sow I shall never live to reap—that I shall be gone before the blossom comes on my potatoes."

The strangeness of it had often struck me before, but I said nothing.

"I suppose it is best that I should take an interest in these things," went on the old gentleman. "Death is so near me that I can hear him as if it were through a crazy partition. I know he is there. I can hear him moving about continually. My interest in the farm is the partition that divides us. If it were away I should be with him face to face."

Mr M'Ian was perhaps the oldest man in the island, and he did not dislike talking about his advanced age. A man at fifty-five, perhaps, wishes to be considered younger than he really is. The man above ninety has outlived that vanity. He is usually as proud of the years he has numbered as the commander of the battles he has won, or the millionaire of the wealth he has acquired. In respect

of his great age, such a one is singular amongst his fellows. After a little pause Mr M'Ian flowed on:

"I remember very well the night the century came in. My regiment was then lying in the town of Galway in Ireland. We were all at supper that evening at the quarters of Major M'Manus, our commanding officer. Very merry we were, singing songs and toasting the belles we knew. Well, when twelve o'clock struck the major rose and proposed in a flowing bowl the health of the stranger—the nineteenth century—coupled with the hope that it would be a better century than the other. I'm not sure that it has been a whit better, so far at least as it has gone. For thirty years I have been the sole survivor of that merry table."

"Sixty-five years is a long time to look back, Mr M'Ian."

The old gentleman walked on laughing to himself. "What fools men are—doctors especially! I was very ill shortly after with a liver complaint, and was sent to Edinburgh to consult the great doctors and professors there. They told me I was dying; that I had not many months to live. The fools! they are dead, their sons are dead, and here I am, able to go about yet. I suppose they thought that I would take their stuffs."

By this time we had reached the house. Mr M'Ian left his white hat and staff in the porch : he then went to the cupboard and took out a small spirit case in which he kept bitters cunningly compounded. He gave Fellowes and myself—Fellowes had finished his letters by this time—a tiny glassful, took the same amount himself. We then all went out and sat down on a rocky knoll near the house which looked seaward, and talked about Sir John Moore and Wellington till dinner time.

We stayed with the M'Ians for a couple of days, and on the third we drove over to Ardvasar to catch the steamer there that afternoon on its way to Portree.

As we drove slowly up the glen, my companion said, "That old gentleman is to my mind worth Blaavin, Coruisk, Glen Sligachan, and all the rest of it. In his own way he is just as picturesque and strange as they are. When he goes, the island will have lost one of its peculiar charms."

" He is a thorough Islesman," said I ; " and for him Blaavin forms as appropriate a background as the desert for the Arab, or the prairie for the Pawnee Indian. When he dies it will be like the dying of the last eagle. He is about the end of the old stock. The younger generation of Skyemen

will never be like their fathers. They have more general information than their elders, they have fewer prejudices, they are more amenable to advice, much less stubborn and self-willed—but they are by comparison characterless. In a few years, when they will have the island in their own hands, better sheep will be produced I have no doubt, finer qualities of wool will be sent south, grand hotels will be erected here and there—but for all that Skye will have become tame: it will have lost that unpurchaseable something—human character; and will resemble Blaavin shorn of its mist-wreaths."

When we reached the top of the glen, and dropped down on the Parliamentary Road near the lake of water lilies, we held our way to the right, toward the point of Sleat. We passed the farm of Knock, the white outhouses, the church and school-house, the old castle on the shore, and driving along, we could pleasantly depasture our eyes on the cultivated ground, with a picturesque hut perched here and there; the towering masses of the Knoydart hills and the Sound of Sleat between. Sleat is the best wooded, the sunniest, and most carefully cultivated portion of the island; and passing along the road the traveller is struck with signs of blithe industry and contentment. As you

draw near Armadale Castle you can hardly believe that you are in Skye at all. The hedges are as trim as English hedges, the larch plantations which cover the faces of the low hills that look towards the sea are not to be surpassed by any larch plantations in the country. The Armadale home farm is a model of neatness, the Armadale porter-lodges are neat and white; and when, through openings of really noble trees, you obtain a glimpse of the castle itself, a handsome modern-looking building rising from sweeps of closely-shaven lawn, you find it hard to believe that you are within a few miles of the moory desolation that stretches between Isle Oronsay and Broadford. Great lords and great seats, independent of the food they provide the imagination, are of the highest practical uses to a country. From far Duntulm Macdonald has come here and settled, and around him to their very tops the stony hills laugh in green. Great is the power of gold. Drop a sovereign into the hat of the mendicant seated by the wayside and into his face you bring a pleasant light. Bestow on land what gold can purchase, Labour, and of the stoniest aridity you make an emerald.

Ardvasar is situated about the distance of a mile from the Armadale plantations, and counts perhaps some twenty houses. A plain inn stands by

the wayside, where refreshments may be procured; there is a merchant's shop filled with goods of the most miscellaneous description; in this little place also resides a most important personage—the agent of the Messrs Hutcheson, who is learned in the comings and goings of the steamers. On our arrival we learned from the agent that the steamer on the present occasion would be unusually late, as she had not yet been sighted between Ardnamurchan and Eig. In all probability she would not be off Ardvasar till ten P.M. It is difficult to kill time anywhere; but at this little Skye clachan it is more difficult than almost anywhere else. We fed the horse, and returned it and the dog-cart to Mr M'Ian. We sat in the inn and looked aimlessly out of the window; we walked along the ravine, and saw the stream sleeping in brown pools, and then hurrying on in tiny waterfalls; we watched the young barbarians at play in the wide green in front of the houses; we lounged in the merchant's shop; we climbed to the top of eminences and looked seaward, and imagined fondly that we beheld a streak of steamer smoke on the horizon. The afternoon wore away, and then we had tea at the inn. By this the steamer had been visible for some little time, and had gone in to Eig. After tea we carried our traps down to the stony

pier and placed them in the boat which would convey us to the steamer when she lay to in the bay. Thereafter we spent an hour in watching men blasting a huge rock in a quarry close at hand. We saw the train laid and lighted, the men scuttling off, and then there was a dull report, and the huge rock tumbled quietly over in ruins. When we got back to the pier, passengers were gathering: drovers with their dogs—ancient women in scarlet plaids and white caps, going on to Balmacara or Kyle—a sailor, fresh from China, dressed in his best clothes, with a slate-coloured parrot in a wicker cage, which he was conveying to some young people at Broadford. On the stony pier we waited for a considerable time, and then Mr Hutcheson's agent, accompanied by some half dozen men, came down in a hurry; into the boat we were all bundled, drovers, dogs, ancient women, sailor, parrot, and all, the boat shoved off, the agent stood up in the bow, the men bent to their oars, and by the time we were twenty boat-lengths from the pier the *Clansman* had slid into the bay opposite the castle and lay to, letting off volumes of noisy steam.

When the summer night was closing the *Clansman* steamed out of Armadale Bay. Two or three ladies were yet visible on the deck. Wrapped in

their plaids, and with their dogs around them, drovers were smoking amidships; sportsmen in knickerbockers were smoking on the hurricane deck; and from the steerage came at intervals a burst of canine thunder from the leashes of pointers and setters congregated there. As the night fell the air grew cold, the last lady disappeared, the sportsmen withdrew from their airy perches, amidships the pipe of the drover became a point of intense red. In the lighted cabin gentlemen were drinking whisky punch, and discussing, as their moods went, politics, the weather, the fluctuations in the price of stock, and the condition of grouse. Among these we sat; and my companion fell into conversation with a young man of an excited manner and a restless eye. I could see at a glance that he belonged to the same class as my tobacco-less friend of Glen Sligachan. On Fellowes he bestowed his entire biography, made known to him the name of his family—which was, by the way, a noble one — volunteered the information that he had served in the Mediterranean squadron, that he had been tried by a court martial for a misdemeanour of which he was entirely guiltless, and had through the testimony of nefarious witnesses been dismissed the service. While all this talk was going on the steward and his assistants had swept

away the glasses from the saloon table, and from the oddest corners and receptacles were now drawing out pillows, sheets, and blankets. In a trice everything became something else; the sofas of the saloon became beds, the tables of the saloon became beds, beds were spread on the saloon floor, beds were extemporised near the cabin windows. When the transformation had been completed, and several of the passengers had coiled themselves comfortably in their blankets, the remainder struggling with their boots, or in various stages of dishabille, the ex-naval man suddenly called out "Steward!"

That functionary looked in at the saloon door in an instant.

"Bring me a glass of brandy and water."

"It's quite impossible, Mr ——," said the steward; "the spirit-room is shut for the night. Besides, you have had a dozen glasses of brandy and water to-day already. You had better go to bed, sir."

"Didn't I tell you," said the ex-naval man, addressing Fellowes, who had by this time got his coat and vest off; "didn't I tell you that the whole world is in a conspiracy against me? It makes a dead set at me. That fellow now is as great a foe of mine as was the commodore at Malta."

Fellowes made no reply, and got into bed. I followed his example. The ex-naval man sat gloomily alone for a while, and then with the assistance of the steward he undressed and clambered into a cool berth beside one of the cabin windows. Thereafter the lights were turned low.

I could not sleep, however; the stifling air of the place, in which there lived a faint odour of hot brandy and water, and the constant throb throb of the engines, kept me awake. I turned from one side to the other, till at last my attention was attracted by the movements of my strange friend opposite. He raised his head stealthily and took covert survey of the saloon; then he leant on his elbow; then he sat upright in his berth. That feat accomplished, he began to pour forth to some imaginary auditor the story of his wrongs.

He had not gone on long when a white night-capped head bounced up in a far corner of the dim saloon. "Will you be good enough," said the pale apparition in a severe voice, "to go to sleep? It's monstrous, sir, that you should disturb gentlemen at this hour of the night by your nonsensical speeches."

At the sight and the voice the ex-naval man sank into his berth as suddenly as an alarmed

beaver sinks into his dam, and there was silence for a time.

Shortly, from the berth, I saw the ex-naval man's head rising as stealthily as the head of a blackcock above a bunch of rushes. Again he sat up in bed, and again to the same invisible auditor he confided his peculiar griefs.

"Confound you, sir." "What do you mean, sir?" and at the half-dozen white apparitions confronting him the ex-naval man again dived.

In about ten minutes the head opposite began again to stir. Never from ambush did Indian warrior rise more noiselessly than did the ex-naval man from his blankets. He paused for a little on his elbow, looked about him cautiously, got into a sitting position, and began a third harangue.

"What the devil!" "This is intolerable!" "Steward, steward!" "Send the madman on deck;" and the saloon rose *en masse* against the disturber of its rest. The steward came running in at the outcry, but the ex-naval man had ducked under like a shot, and was snoring away in simulated slumber as if he had been the Seven Sleepers rolled into one.

That night he disturbed our rest no more, and shortly after I fell asleep.

A fierce trampling on deck, and the noise of the

PORTREE

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crane hoisting the cargo from the deep recesses of the hold awoke me. I dressed and went above. The punctual sun was up and at his work. We were off a strip of sandy beach, with a row of white houses stretching along it, and with low rocky hills behind the houses. Some half-dozen deeply-laden shore boats were leaving the side of the steamer. Then a cow was brought forward, a door was opened in the bulwarks, and the animal quietly shoved out. Crummie disappeared with a considerable plunge, and came to the surface somewhat scant of breath, and with her mind in a state of utter bewilderment. A boat was in readiness; by a deft hand a coil of rope was fastened around the horns, the rowers bent to their task, and Crummie was towed ashore in triumph, and on reaching it seemed nothing the worse of her unexpected plunge.

The noisy steam was then shut off; from the moving paddles great belts of pale-green foam rushed out and died away far astern; the strip of beach, the white houses with the low rocky hills behind, began to disappear, and the steamer stood directly for Portree, which place was reached in time for breakfast. We then drove to the Landlord's, and on alighting I found my friend John Penruddock marching up and down on the gravel in front of the house.

JOHN PENRUDDOCK.

PENRUDDOCK was rather a hero of mine. He was as tall, muscular, and broad-shouldered as the men whom Mr Kingsley delights to paint, and his heart was as tender as his head was shrewd. A loquacious knave could not take him in, and from his door a beggar would not be sent empty away. The pressure of his mighty hand when he met you gave you some idea of what the clenched fist would be with its iron ridge of knuckles. He was the healthiest-minded man I have ever met in my walk through life. He was strong yet gentle, pious yet without the slightest tincture of cant or dogmatism; and his mind was no more infested with megrims, or vanity, or hypochondriasis, or sentimentality, than the wind-swept sky of June with vapours. He was loyal and affectionate to the backbone: he stuck to his friends to the last. Pen was like the run of ordinary mortals while your day of prosperity remained, but when your night of difficulty fell he came out like a lighthouse, and sent you rays of encouragement and help.

Pen had farms in Ireland as well as in Skye, and it was when on a visit to him in Ulster some years since that I became acquainted with his homely but enduring merits. For years I had not seen such a man. There was a reality and honest stuff in him, which in living with him and watching his daily goings on revealed itself hour by hour, quite new to me. The people I had been accustomed to meet, talk with, live with, were different. The tendency of each of these was towards art in one form or other. And there was a certain sadness somehow in the contemplation of them. They fought and strove bravely; but like the Old Guard at Waterloo, it was brave fighting on a lost field. After years of toil there were irremediable defects in that man's picture; fatal flaws in that man's book. In all their efforts were failure and repulse, apparent to some extent to themselves, plain enough to the passionless looker-on. That resolute, hopeless climbing of heaven was, according to the mood, a thing to provoke a jest or a sigh. With Penruddock all was different. What he strove after he accomplished. He had a cheerful mastery over circumstances. All things went well with him. His horses ploughed for him, his servants reaped for him, his mills ground for him, successfully. The very winds and dews of

heaven were to him helps and aids. Year after year his crops grew, yellowed, were cut down and gathered into barns, and men fed thereupon; and year after year there lay an increasing balance at his banker's. This continual, ever-victorious activity seemed strange to me — a new thing under the sun. We usually think that poets, painters, and the like, are finer, more heroical, than cultivators of the ground. But does the production of a questionable book really surpass in merit the production of a field of unquestionable turnips? Perhaps in the severe eyes of the gods the production of a wooden porringer, water-tight, and fit for household uses, is of more account than the rearing of a tower of Babel, *meant* to reach to heaven. Alas! that so many must work on these Babel towers; cannot help toiling on them to the very death, though every stone is heaved into its place with weariness and mortal pain; though when the life of the builder is wasted out on it, it is fit habitation for no creature, can shelter no one from rain or snow—but towering in the eyes of men a *Folly* (as the Scotch phrase it) after all.

I like to recall my six weeks' sojourn in sunny Ulster with my friend. I like to recall the rows of whity-green willows that bordered the slow streams;

the yellow flax fields with their azure flowers, reminding one of the maidens in German ballads; the flax tanks and windmills; the dark-haired girls embroidering muslins before the doors, and stealing the while the hearts of sheepish sweethearts leaning against the cottage walls, by soft blarney and quick glances; the fields in which a cow, a donkey, half a dozen long-legged porkers—looking for all the world like pigs on stilts—cocks and hens, ducks and geese promiscuously fed; and, above all, I like to recall that somnolent Sunday afternoon in the little uncomfortably-seated Presbyterian church, when—two-thirds of the congregation asleep, the precentor soundest of all, and the good clergyman illustrating the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints by a toddler at its mother's knee attempting to walk, falling and bumping its forehead, getting picked up, and in a little while, although the bump had grown to the size of an egg, spurring and struggling to get to the floor once again—my eye wandered to the open church door, and in the sunshine saw a feeding bee fold its wings on a flower and swing there in the wind, and I forgot for a while drawling shepherd and slumbering flock. These are trifles, but they are pleasant trifles. Staying with Pen, however, an event of importance did occur.

It was arranged that we should go to the fair at Keady; but Pen was obliged on the day immediately preceding to leave his farm at Arranmore on matter of important business. It was a wretched day of rain, and I began to tremble for the morrow. After dinner the storm abated, and the dull dripping afternoon set in. While a distempered sunset flushed the west the heavy carts from the fields came rolling into the courtyard, the horses fetlock-deep in clay and steaming like ovens. Then, at the sound of the bell, the labourers came, wet, weary, sickles hanging over their arms, yet with spirits merry enough. These the capacious kitchen received, where they found supper spread. It grew dark earlier than usual, and more silent. The mill-wheel rushed louder in the swollen stream, and lights began to glimmer here and there in the dusty windows. Penruddock had not yet come; he was not due for a couple of hours. Time began to hang heavily; so slipping to bed I solved every difficulty by falling soundly asleep.

The lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the barking of dogs, and the loud voices of men in the courtyard beneath, awoke me shortly after dawn. In the silence that followed I again fell asleep, and was roused at last by the clangour of the breakfast

bell. When I got up the sun was streaming gloriously through the latticed window; heaven was all the gayer and brighter for yesterday's gloom and sulky tears, and the rooks were cawing and flapping cheerfully in the trees above. When I entered the breakfast-room Pen was already there, and the tea-urn was bubbling on the table.

At the close of the meal Tim brought the dog-cart to the door. Pen glanced at his watch. "We have hit the time exactly, and will arrive as soon as Mick and the cattle." There was an encouraging chir-r-r, a flick of the whip, and in a trice we were across the bridge and pegging along the highway at a great pace.

After proceeding about a mile, we turned into a narrow path which gradually led us up into a wild irregular country. Corn-fields, flax-tanks, and sunny pasture lands, dotted with sheep, were left behind as up-hill we tugged, and reached at last a level stretch of purple moor and black peat bog. Sometimes for a mile the ground was black with pyramids of peat; at other times the road wriggled before us through a dark olive morass, enlivened here and there with patches of treacherous green; the sound of our wheels startling into flight the shy and solitary birds native to the region. Ever and anon, too, when we gained sufficient elevation,

we could see the great waves of the landscape rolling in clear morning light away to the horizon; each wave crested with farms and belts of woodland, and here and there wreaths of smoke rising up from hollows where towns and villages lay hid. After a while the road grew smoother, and afar the little town of Keady sparkled in the sun, backed by a range of smelting furnaces, the flames tamed by the sunlight, making a restless shimmer in the air, and blotting out everything beyond. Beneath, the high road was covered with sheep and cows, and vehicles of every description, pushing forward to one point; the hill paths also which led down to it were moving threads of life. On the brow of the hill, just before we began to descend, John pulled up for a moment. It was a pretty sight. A few minutes' drive brought us into Keady, and such a busy scene I had never before witnessed. The narrow streets and open spaces were crowded with stalls, cattle, and people, and the press and confusion was so great that our passage to the inn where our machine was to be put up was matter of considerable difficulty. Men, stripped to trousers and shirt, with red hair streaming in the wind, rushed backwards and forwards with horses, giving vent at the same time to the wildest vociferations, while clumps of sporting gentlemen, with straws in their

mouths, were inspecting, with critical eyes, the points of the animals. Travelling auctioneers set up their little carts in the streets, and with astonishing effrontery and power of lung harangued the crowd on the worth and cheapness of the articles which they held in their hands. Beggars were very plentiful—disease and deformity their stock-in-trade. Fragments of humanity crawled about upon crutches. Women stretched out shrunken arms. Blind men rolled sightless eyeballs, blessing the passenger when a copper tinkled in their iron jugs—cursing yet more fervently when disappointed in their expectation. In one place a melancholy acrobat in dirty tights and faded tinsel was performing evolutions with a crazy chair on a bit of ragged carpet; he threw somersaults over it; he embraced it firmly, and began spinning along the ground like a wheel, in which performance man and chair seemed to lose their individuality and become one as it were; and at the close of every feat he stood erect with that indescribable curve of the right hand which should always be followed by thunders of applause, the clown meanwhile rolling in ecstasies of admiration in the sawdust. Alas! no applause followed the exertions of the artist. The tights were getting more threadbare and dingy. His hollow face was covered with perspiration, and

there was but the sparsest sprinkling of halfpence. I threw him a shilling, but it rolled among the spectators' feet, and was lost in the dust. He groped about in search of it for some little time, and then came back to his carpet and his crazy chair. Poor fellow! he looked as if he were used to that kind of thing. There were many pretty faces among the girls, and scores of them were walking about in holiday dresses—rosy-faced lasses, with black hair, and blue eyes shadowed by long dark eyelashes. How they laughed, and how sweetly the brogue melted from their lips in reply to the ardent blarney of their sweethearts. At last we reached an open square, or cross, as it would be called in Scotland, more crowded, if possible, than the narrow streets. Hordes of cattle bellowed here. Here were sheep from the large farms standing in clusters of fifties and hundreds; there a clump of five or six, with the widow in her clean cap sitting beside them. Many an hour ago she and they started from the turf hut and the pasture beyond the hills. Heaven send her a ready sale and good prices! In the centre of this open space great benches were erected, heaped with eggs, butter, cheeses, the proprietors standing behind anxiously awaiting the advances of customers. One section was crowded with sweetmeat stalls, much fre-

quented by girls and their sweethearts. Many a rustic compliment there had for reply a quick glance or a scarlet cheek. Another was devoted to poultry; geese stood about in flocks; bunches of hens were scattered on the ground, their legs tied together; and turkeys, enclosed in wicker baskets, surveyed the scene with quick eyes, their wattles all the while burning with indignation. On reaching the inn which displayed for ensign a swan with two heads afloat on an azure stream, we ordered dinner at three o'clock, and thereafter started on foot to where Penruddock's stock was stationed. It was no easy matter to force a path; cows and sheep were always getting in the way. Now and then an escaped hen would come clucking and flapping among our feet, and once a huge bull, with horns levelled to the charge, came dashing down the street, scattering everything before him. Finally, we reached the spot where Mick and his dogs were keeping watch over the cows and sheep.

"Got here all safe, Mick, I see."

"All safe, sir, not a quarter o' an hour ago."

"Well, I have opened my shop. We'll see how we get on."

By this time the dealers had gathered about, and were closely examining the sheep, and holding whispered consultations. At length an ex-

cited-looking man came running forward; plunging his hand into his breeches pocket, he produced therefrom half-a-crown, which he slapped into Penruddock's hand, at the same time crying out "Ten-and-six a head." "Fifteen," said John, returning the coin. "Twelve shillings," said the man, bringing down the coin with tremendous energy; "an' may I niver stir if I'll give another farthin' for the best sheep in Keady." "Fifteen," said John, flinging the half-crown on the ground; "and I don't care whether you stir again or not." By this time a crowd had gathered about, and the chorus began. "There isn't a dacenter man than Mr Penruddock in the market. I've known him iver since he came to the counthry." "Shure an' he is," began another; "he's a jintleman ivery inch. He always gives to the poor man a bit o' baccy, or a glass. Ach, Mr Loney, *he's* not the one to ax you too high a price. Shure, Mr Penruddock, you'll come down a sixpence jist to make a bargain." "Is't Mr Loney that's goin' to buy?" cried a lame man from the opposite side, and in the opposite interest. "There isn't sich a dealer in county Monaghan as Mr Loney. Of coorse you'll come down something, Mr Penruddock." "He's a rich one, too, is Mr Loney," said the lame man, sidling up to John,

and winking in a knowing manner, "an' a power o' notes he has in his pocket-book." Mr Loney, who had been whispering with his group a little apart, and who had again made an inspection of the stock, returned the second time to the charge. "Twelve-an'-six," cried he, and again the half-crown was slapped into Penruddock's palm. "Twelve-an'-six, an' not another farthin' to save my soul." "Fifteen," said John, returning the half-crown with equal emphasis; "you know my price, and if you won't take it you can let it stand." The dealer disappeared in huge wrath, and the chorus broke out in praises of both. By this time Mr Loney was again among the sheep; it was plain his heart was set upon the purchase. Every now and then he caught one, got it between his legs, examined the markings on its face, and tested the depth and quality of its wool. He appeared for the third time, while the lame man and the leader of the opposing chorus seemed coming to blows, so zealous were they in the praises of their respective heroes. "Fourteen," said Mr Loney, again producing the half-crown, spitting into his hand at the same time, as much as to say, he would do the business now. "Fourteen," he cried, crushing the half-crown into Penruddock's hand, and holding it there. "Fourteen, an' divil a rap more I'll give." "Fourteen,"

said John, as if considering, then throwing back the coin, "Fourteen-and-six and let it be a bargain."

"Didn't I say," quoth John's chorus leader, looking round him with an air of triumph, "didn't I say that Mr Penruddock's a jintleman? Ye see how he drops the sixpence. I niver saw him do a mane thing yet. Ach, he's the jintleman ivery inch, an' that's saying a dale, considerin' his size."

"Fourteen-and-six be it then," said the dealer, bringing down the coin for the last time. "An' if I take the lot you'll give me two pounds in t' myself?"

"Well, Loney, I don't care although I do," said Penruddock, pocketing the coin at last. A roll of notes was produced, the sum counted out, and the bargain concluded. The next moment Loney was among the sheep, scoring some mark or other on their backs with a piece of red chalk. Penruddock scattered what spare coppers he possessed among the bystanders, and away they went to sing the praises of the next bargain-maker.

Pen turned to me laughing. "This is a nice occupation for a gentleman of respectable birth and liberal education, is it not?"

"Odd. It is amusing to watch the process by which your sheep are converted into bank-notes

Does your friend, Mr Loney, buy the animals for himself?"

"Oh, dear, no. We must have middlemen of one kind or another in this country. Loney is commissioned to purchase, and is allowed so much on the transaction."

By this time a young handsome fellow pushed his horse through the crowd and approached us. "Good morning," cried he to Penruddock. "Any business doing?"

"I have just sold my sheep."

"Good price?"

"Fair. Fourteen and six."

"Ah, not so bad. These cattle, I suppose, are yours? We must try if we can't come to a bargain about them." Dismounting, he gave his horse in keeping to a lad, and he and John went off to inspect the stock.

Business was proceeding briskly on all sides. There was great higgling as to prices, and shillings and half-crowns were tossed in a wonderful manner from palm to palm. Apparently, nothing could be transacted without that ceremony, whatever it might mean. Idlers were everywhere celebrating the merits and "dacency" of the various buyers and sellers. Huge greasy leather pocket-books, of undoubted antiquity, were to be

seen in many a hand, and rolls of bank-notes were deftly changing owners. The ground, too, was beginning to clear, and purchasers were driving off their cattle. Many of the dealers who had disposed of stock were taking their ease in the inns. You could see them looking out of the open windows; and occasionally a man whose potations had been early and excessive went whooping through the crowd. In a short time John returned with his friend.

"Captain Broster," said John, presenting him, "has promised to dine with us at three. Sharp at the hour, mind, for we wish to leave early."

"I 'll be punctual as clockwork," said the captain, turning to look after his purchases.

We strolled up and down till three o'clock, and then bent our steps to the inn, where we found Broster waiting. In honour to his guests the landlord himself brought in dinner, and waited with great diligence. When the table was cleared we had punch and cigars, and sat chatting at the open window. The space in front was tolerably clear of cattle now, but dealers were hovering about, standing in clumps, or promenading in parties of twos and threes. But at this point a new element had entered into the scene. It was dinner hour, and many of the forgemen from the furnaces above had

come down to see what was going on. Huge, hulking, swarthy-featured fellows they were. Welshmen, chiefly, as I was afterwards told, who, confident in their strength, were at no pains to conceal their contempt for the natives. They, too, mingled in the crowd, but the greater number leaned lazily against the houses, smoking their short pipes, and indulging in the dangerous luxury of "chaffing" the farmers. Many a rude wit-combat was going on, accompanied by roars of laughter, snatches of which we occasionally heard. Broster had been in the Crimea, was wounded at Alma, recovered, went through all the work and privation of the first winter of the siege, got knocked up, came home on sick leave, and having had enough of it, as he frankly confessed, took the opportunity on his father's death, which happened then, to sell out and settle as a farmer on a small property to which he fell heir. He chatted about the events of the war in an easy familiar way, quietly, as if the whole affair had been a game at football; and when courage, strength, and splendid prospects were changed by unseen bullet, or grim bayonet stab, into a rude grave on the bleak plateau, the thing was mentioned as a mere matter of course! Sometimes a comrade's fate met with an expression of soldierly regret, slight and indifferent enough, yet

with a certain pathos which no high-flown oration could reach. For the indifferent tone seemed to acquiesce in destiny, to consider that disappointment had been too common in the life of every man during the last six thousand years to warrant any raving or passionate surprise at this time of day; that in any case our ordinary pulse and breath beat our march to the grave; passion the double-quick; and when it is all over, there is little need for outcry and the shedding of tears over the eternal rest. In the midst of his talk voices rose in one of the apartments below; the noise became altercation, and immediately a kind of struggling or dragging was heard in the flagged passage, and then a tipsy forgeman was unceremoniously shot out into the square, and the inn door closed with an angry bang. The individual seemed to take the indignity in very good part; along he staggered, his hands in his pockets, heedless of the satirical gibes and remarks of his companions, who were smoking beneath our windows. Looking out, we could see that his eyes were closed, as if he scorned the outer world, possessing one so much more satisfactory within himself. As he went he began to sing from sheer excess of happiness, the following stanza coming distinctly to our ears:—

"When I was a chicken as big as a hen,
My mother 'ot me, an' I 'ot her agen;
My father came in for to see the r-r-rrow,
So I lifted my fist, an' I 'ot him a clow."

"I hope that fellow won't come to grief," said Broster, as the forgeman lurched through a group of countrymen intent on a bargain, and passed on without notice or apology, his eyes closed, and singing as before—

"Ses my mother, ses she, There's a Peeler at hand."

"By Jove, he's down at last, and there'll be the devil to pay!" We looked out, the forgeman was prone in the dust, singing, and apparently unconscious that he had changed his position. A party of farmers were standing around laughing; one of them had put out his foot and tripped the forgeman as he passed. The next moment a bare-armed black-browed hammersmith strode out from the wall, and, without so much as taking the pipe from his mouth, felled the dealer at a blow, and then looked at his companions as if wishing to be informed if he could do anything in the same way for them. The blow was a match dropped in a powder magazine. Alelu! to the combat. There were shouts and yells. Insult had been rankling long in the breasts of both parties. Old scores had to be paid off. From every quarter, out of the

inns, leaving potheen and ale, down the streets from among the cattle, the dealers came rushing to the fray. The forgemen mustered with alacrity, as if battle were the breath of their nostrils. In a few seconds the square was the scene of a general *mêlée.* The dealers fought with their short heavy sticks ; the forgemen had but the weapons nature gave, but their arms were sinewed with iron, and every blow told like a hammer. These last were overpowered for a while, but the alarm had already spread to the furnaces above, and parties of twos and threes came at a run, and flung themselves in to the assistance of their companions. Just at this moment a couple of constables pressed forward into the yelling crowd. A hammersmith came behind one, and seizing his arms, held him, despite his struggles, firmly as in a vice. The other was knocked over and trampled under foot. " Good heavens, murder will be done," cried Broster, lifting his heavy whip from the table ; "we must try and put an end to this disgraceful scene. Will you join me ?" " With heart and soul," said Penruddock, " and there is no time to be lost. Come along." At the foot of the stair we found the landlord shaking in every limb. He had locked the door, and was standing in the passage with the

key in his hand. "M'Queen, we want out; open the door."

"Shure, jintlemen, you're not goin' just now. You'll be torn to paces if you go."

"If you won't open the door, give me the key, and I'll open it myself."

The landlord passively yielded. Broster unlocked the door, and flung the key down on the flagged passage. "Now, my lads," cried he to half-a-dozen countrymen who were hanging-on spectators on the skirts of the combat, and at the same time twisting his whip-lash tightly round his right hand till the heavy-leaded head became a formidable weapon, a blow from which would be effective on any skull of ordinary susceptibility; "Now, my lads, we are resolved to put an end to this; will you assist us?" The captain's family had been long resident in the county, he was himself personally known to all of them, and a cheerful "Ay, ay," was the response. "Penruddock, separate them when you can, knock them over when you can't, Welshman or Irishman, it's quite the same." So saying, in we drove. Broster clove a way for himself, distributing his blows with great impartiality, and knocking over the combatants like nine-pins. We soon reached the middle of the square, where the

fight was hottest. The captain was swept away in an eddy for a moment, and right in front of Penruddock and myself two men were grappling on the ground. As they rolled over, we saw that one was the hammersmith who had caused the whole affray. We flung ourselves upon them, and dragged them up. The dealer, with whom I was more particularly engaged, had got the worst of it, and plainly wasn't sorry to be released from the clutches of his antagonist. With his foe it was different. His slow sullen blood was fairly in a blaze, and when Pen pushed him aside, he dashed at him and struck him a severe blow on the face. In a twinkling Penruddock's coat was off, while the faintest stream of blood trickled from his upper lip. "Well, my man," said he, as he stood up ready for action, "if that's the game you mean to play at, I hope to give you a bellyful before I've done." "Seize that man, knock him over," said Broster; "you're surely not going to fight *him*, Penruddock, it's sheer madness; knock him over." "I tell you what it is," said Penruddock, turning savagely, "you shan't deprive me of the luxury of giving this fellow a sound hiding." Broster shrugged his shoulders, as if giving up the case. By this time the cry arose, "Black Jem's goin' to fight the gentleman;" and a wide enough ring was

formed. Many who were prosecuting small combats of their own desisted, that they might behold the greater one. Broster stood beside John. "He's an ugly mass of strength," whispered he, "and will hug you like a bear; keep him well off, and remain cool for Heaven's sake." "Ready?" said John, stepping forward. "As a lark i' the mornin'," growled Jem, as he took up his ground. The men were very wary—Jem retreating round and round, John advancing. Now and then one or other darted out a blow, but it was generally stopped, and no harm done. At last the blows went home; the blood began to rise. The men drew closer, and struck with greater rapidity. They are at it at last, hammer and tongs. No shirking or flinching now. Jem's blood was flowing. He was evidently getting severely punished. He couldn't last long at that rate. He fought desperately for a close, when a blinding blow full in the face brought him to the earth. He got up again like a madman, the whole bull-dog nature of him possessed and mastered by brutal rage. He cursed and struggled in the arms of his supporters to get at his enemy, but by main force they held him back till he recovered himself. "He'll be worked off in another round," I heard Broster whisper in my ear. Ah! here they come! I glanced at Pen for a moment as he

stood with his eye on his foe. There was that in his face that boded no good. The features had hardened into iron somehow; the pitiless mouth was clenched, the eye cruel. A hitherto unknown part of his nature revealed itself to me as he stood there — perhaps unknown to himself. God help us, what strangers we are to ourselves! In every man's nature there is an interior unexplored as that of Africa, and over that region what wild beasts may roam! But they are at it again; Jem still fights for a close, and every time his rush is stopped by a damaging blow. They are telling rapidly; his countenance, by no means charming at the best, is rapidly transforming. Look at that hideously gashed lip! But he has dodged Penruddock's left this time, and clutched him in his brawny arms. Now comes the tug of war, skill pitted against skill, strength against strength. They breathe for a little in each other's grip, as if summoning every energy. They are at it now, broad chest to chest. Now they seem motionless, but by the quiver of their frames you can guess the terrific strain going on. Now one has the better, now the other, as they twine round each other, lithe and supple as serpents. Penruddock yields! No! That's a bad dodge of Jem's. By Jove he loses his grip. All is over with him. Pen's brow grows

dark; the veins start out on it; and the next moment Black Jem, the hero of fifty fights, slung over his shoulder, falls heavily to the ground.

At his fall a cheer rose from the dealers. "You blacksmith fellows had better make off," cried Broster; "your man has got the thrashing he deserves, and you can carry him home with you. I am resolved to put a stop to these disturbances —there have been too many of late." The furnacemen hung for a moment irresolute, seemingly half-inclined to renew the combat, but a formidable array of cattle-dealers pressed forward and turned the scale. They decided on a retreat. Black Jem, who had now come to himself, was lifted up, and, supported by two men, retired toward the works and dwellings on the upper grounds, accompanied by his companions, who muttered many a surly oath and vow of future vengeance.

When we got back to the inn, Pen was very anxious about his face. He washed, and carefully perused his features in the little looking-glass. Luckily, with the exception of the upper lip slightly cut by Jim's first blow, no mark of the combat presented itself. At this happy result of his investigations he expressed great satisfaction— Broster laughing the meanwhile, and telling him that he was as careful of his face as a young lady.

The captain came down to see us off. The fair was over now, and the little streets were almost deserted. The dealers—apprehensive of another descent from the furnaces—had hurried off as soon as their transactions could in any way permit. Groups of villagers, however, were standing about the doors discussing the event of the day; and when Penruddock appeared he became, for a quarter of an hour, an object of public interest for the first time in his life, and so far as he has yet lived for the last; an honour to which he did not seem to attach any particular value.

We shook hands with the captain; then, at a touch of the whip, the horse started at a gallant pace, scattering a brood of ducks in all directions; and in a few minutes Keady—with its white-washed houses and dark row of furnaces, tipped with tongues of flame, pale and shrunken yet in the lustre of the afternoon, but which would rush out wild and lurid when the evening fell—lay a rapidly dwindling speck behind.

I am induced to set down this business of the Irish market and market fight in order that the reader may gather some idea of the kind of man Penruddock was. He was not particularly witty, although on occasion he could say a good and neat thing enough; on no subject was he pro-

foundly read; I don't think that he ever attempted to turn a stanza, even when a boy and in love; he did not care for art; he was only conscious of a blind and obscure delight in music, and even for *that* the music had to be of the simplest kind—melody, not harmony. He had his limitations, you see: but as a man I have seldom met his equal. He was sagacious, kindly, affectionate, docile, patient, and unthinking of self. There was a peculiar deference in his ordinary manner, as if he were continually in the presence of a lady. Above all things, he was sincere, and you trusted Pen when you came to know him as implicitly as you would a law of nature. If you were out in a small boat in a storm with him; if you were ascending or descending a steep rocky hill-face with him, and got giddy on his hands; if you were in the heart of a snow-storm on the hills with him, when all traces of the road were lost, and the cold began to make thick your blood with the deadly pleasure of sleep—in such circumstances you found out what he was: cool, courageous, helpful; full of resource, with a quick brain, an iron nerve, a giant's strength. To the possessor of such solid worth and manhood your merely brilliant talker, your epigrammatist, your sayer of smart things, is essentially a poor creature. What

is wit?—a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. What is epigram? Penruddock did not paint pictures or write poems; it was his business "to make good sheep," as the Skye people say, and magnificent sheep he did make.

Pen had an ideal sheep in his mind, and to reach that ideal he was continually striving. At the yearly winnowings of his stock he selected his breeding ewes with the utmost care, and these ewes, without spot or blemish, he crossed with wonderfully-horned and far-brought rams, for which he sometimes paid enormous prices—so at least his neighbours said. His sheep he bred in Skye for the most part, and then he sent them over to Ulster to fatten. There, on pasture and turnips, they throve amazingly, all their good points coming into prominence, all their bad points stealing modestly into the shade. At markets, Penruddock's sheep always brought excellent prices, and his lot was certain to be about the best shown.

Pen and the Landlord had business relations. In partnership, they brought over meal from Ireland, they speculated in turnips, they dealt in curious manures which were to the sour Skye soil what plum-pudding is to a charity boy: above all, he was confederate in a scheme of emigration which the Landlord had concocted, and was in the course

of carrying out. Pen's visit at this time was purely a business one: he wished to see me, but that was far from his sole motive in coming—so he frankly said. But I did not care for that; I was quite able to bear the truth, and was glad to have him on any conditions.

A SMOKING PARLIAMENT.

ONE morning after our return, when breakfast was over, the Landlord, followed by Maida, carried the parrot into the sunshine in front of the house, and, sitting down on one of the iron seats, lighted a cheroot. As there was nothing on the cards on that special morning, we all followed him, and, lifting his cheroot-case, helped ourselves. The morning was warm and pleasant; and as no one had anything particular to say, we smoked in silence and were happy. The only one who was occupied was Fellowes. A newspaper had reached him by post the evening before, and with its pages he was now busy. Suddenly he burst out laughing, and read out from a half column of *facetiæ* how an Irishman was anxious to discover the opposite side of the street, and making inquiries at the passengers, was kept knocking about from one side of the thoroughfare to the other, like a ball in a racket-court. Pat was told that the opposite side of the street was "over there;" and when he got "over there," to his sore bewilderment he dis-

covered that the opposite side of the street, as if on purpose to torment him, had slipped anchor and flitted away to the side on which he had been making inquiries a few moments previously. We all laughed at Pat's intellectual perplexity; and shutting up the paper Fellowes maintained, in the light cynical vein so common at present, that the hunt after the opposite side of the street was no bad image of the hunt after truth. "Truth is always 'over there,'" he said; "and when you get 'over there,' running extreme peril from cab and dray in crossing, you find that it has gone back to the place from which you started. And so a man spends his life in chasing, and is as far on at the end of it as he was at the beginning. No man ever yet reached truth, or the opposite side of the street."

"What creatures those Irish are, to be sure!" said the Landlord, as he knocked a feather of white ash from the tip of his cheroot; "it would be a dull world without them. In India, a single Irishman at a station is enough to banish blue devils. The presence of an Irishman anywhere keeps away low spirits, just as a cat in a house keeps away rats and mice. Every station should wear an Irishman, as an amulet against despondency."

"I have lived a good deal both in Ireland and

the Highlands," said Pen, "and the intellectual differences between the two races have often struck me as not a little curious. They are of the same stock originally, antiquaries say; and yet Ireland is a land of Goshen, overflowing with the milk and honey of humour, whereas in every quality of humour the Highlands are as dry as the Sahara. Jokes don't usually come farther north than the Grampians. One or two are occasionally to be found in Ross-shire over there; but they are far from common, and their appearance is chronicled in the local prints just as the appearance of the capercailzie is chronicled. No joke has yet been found strong-winged enough to cross the Kyles. That's odd, is it not?"

"But have not the Highlanders wit?"

"Oh yes, plenty of it, but rather of the strenuous than of the playful kind; their wit is born for the most part of anger or contempt. 'There she goes,' sneered the Englishman, as Duncan marched past in his tartans at a fair.' 'There she lies,' retorted Duncan, as he knocked the scorner over at a blow. 'Coming from Hell, Lauchlan,' quoth the shepherd, proceeding on a sacrament Sunday to the Free Church, and meeting his friend coming from the Church of the Establishment. 'Better than going to it, Rory,' retorted Lauchlan, as he passed on.

Of that kind of rapid and sufficient retort, of the power of returning a blow swiftly and with interest, the Highlander is not in the least deficient. But he differs from the Irishman in this—that he has no eye for the pleasantly droll side of things; he has no fun in him, no sense of the genially comic. He laughs, but there is generally a touch of scorn in his laughter, and it is almost always directed against a man or a thing. The Irishman's humorous sense puts a stitch in the torn coat, ekes the scanty purse, boils the peas with which he is doomed to limp graveward. The bested Highlander can draw no amelioration of condition from such a source. The two races dine often scantily enough, but it is only the Irishman that can sweeten his potatoes with *point*. 'They talk of hardships,' said the poor Irish soldier as he lay down to sleep on the deck of the transport—'They talk of hardships; but bedad this is the hardest ship I ever was in in my life.' No Highlander would have said *that*. And I believe that the joke made the hard plank all the softer to the joker."

"And how do you account for this difference?"

"I can't account for it. The two races springing from the same stock, I rather think it is *un*accountable; unless, indeed, it be traceable to climatic influence, — the soft, green, rainy Erin producing

riant and ebullient natures; the bare, flinty Highlands, hard and austere ones. There is one quality, however, in which your Highlander can beat the world, with the exception, perhaps, of the North American Indian."

"What quality is that?"

"The quality of never exhibiting astonishment. The Highlander would as soon think of turning his back on his foe as of expressing astonishment at anything. Take a Highland lad from the wilds of Skye or Harris and drop him in Cheapside, and he will retain the most perfect equanimity. He will have no word of marvel for the crowds and the vehicles; the Thames Tunnel will not move him; he will look on St Paul's without flinching. The boy may have only ridden in a peat-cart; but he takes a railway, the fields, hedges, bridges, and villages spinning past, the howling gloom of the tunnels, the speed that carries him in an hour over a greater extent of country than he ever beheld in his life even from his highest hill-top, as the merest matter of course, and unworthy of special remark."

"But the boy will be astonished all the same?"

"Of course he is. The very hair of his soul is standing on end with wonder and terror, but he will make no sign; he is too proud. Will he allow the Sassenach to triumph over him? If he did, he

would not be his father's son. He will not admit that earth holds anything which he has not measured and weighed, and with which he is not perfectly familiar. When Chingachgook groans at the stake in the hearing of his tormentors, the Highlander will express surprise."

"This disinclination to express astonishment, if it does exist to the extent you say amongst the Highlanders, must arise from a solitary mode of living. People up in these Western Islands live on the outskirts of existence, so to speak; and the knowledge that a big, bustling, important world exists beyond their horizon 'intensifies their individualism,' as the poet said the bracing air of old St Andrews intensified his. They are driven in on themselves; they are always standing in an attitude of mental self-defence; they become naturally self-contained and self-sustained."

"To some extent what you say is true; but the main reason of the Highlander's calmness and self-command in the presence of new and wonderful objects is pride. To express astonishment at the sight of an object implies previous ignorance of that object; and no Highlander worthy of the name will admit that he is ignorant of anything under the sun. To come back, however, to what we were speaking about a little while ago,—the

differences between the Highlanders and the Irish —the light-hearted Irishman delights to 'chaff' and to be 'chaffed;' the intenser and more serious-hearted Highlander can neither do the one nor endure the other. The bit of badinage which an Irishman will laugh at and brush carelessly aside, stings the Highlander like a gadfly. When the Highlander is fencing, the button is always coming off his foil, and the point is in your arm before you know where you are. If you enter into a gay wit-combat with a Highlander, it is almost certain to have a serious ending—just as the old Highland wedding-feasts, beginning with pledged healths and universal three-times-three, ended in a brawl and half-a-dozen men dirked."

"Chaff, in common with shoddy, the adulteration of food, and the tailor-sweating system, is the product of an over-ripe civilisation. It is the glimmer on the head of the dead cod-fish—putridity become phosphorescent. It can only thrive in large cities. It is the offspring of impudence and loquacity. I am not astonished that the Highlander cannot endure it; it is out of his way altogether. He no more can use it as a weapon of offence or defence than David could wear the armour of Saul. Chaff grows in the crowded street, not in the wilderness. It is the one thing we have brought into perfection

in these later days. It is a weed that grows lustily, because it is manured with our vices and our decomposed faiths. I don't think the worse of the Highlander because he cannot chaff or endure being chaffed. A London cabman would slang Socrates into silence in a quarter of an hour."

"I suppose," said the Landlord, "when the Skye railway is finished we poor Highlanders will get our jokes from the South, as we get our tea and sugar. It's a pity the Board of Directors did not mention that special import in their prospectus. The shares might have gone off more rapidly, Pen!"

"By the by," said Fellowes, turning to me, "you were speaking the other day of the curious distrust of Nature, which you consider the soul of all Celtic poetry and Celtic superstition, and you were inclined to attribute that distrust and fear to the austerities of climate and physical conformation, to the rain-cloud, and the precipice, the sea-foam, and the rock. I agree with you so far; but I think you lay too much stress on climatic influences and the haggardness of landscape. That quick sense of two powers—of Nature and Humanity, of man and a world outside of man—is the root of all poetry."

"Of course it is. To the Celt, Nature is malign,

evil-disposed, cruel; and his poetry is dreary as the strain of the night wind. To a Wordsworth, on the other hand, Nature is merciful and tranquil, deep-thoughted and calm; and as a consequence his poetry is temperate and humane, cool as a summer evening after the sun has set, and—with all reverence be it spoken—sometimes tiresomely hortatory."

"Preaching is generally dull work, I fear; and Nature's sermons, even when reported by Wordsworth, are as dull as some other sermons which I have heard and read."

"But what I was going to say was, that the sense of malevolence in Nature which you claim as the central fact of Celtic song and superstition, is not so much the result of harsh climates and wild environments as it is a stage in the mental progress of a race. At one stage of progress, all races fear Nature alike. The South-Sea Islander, whose bread-fruit falls into his mouth, fears Nature just as much as the Greenlander, who hunts the white bear on the iceberg and spears the walrus in the foam. When once man has got the upper hand of Nature, when he has made her his slave, when her winds sit in his sails and propel his ships, when she yields him iron whereby she is more firmly bound to his service, when she gives him coal wherewith

to cook food and to mitigate the rigours of her winters—when man has got that length, the aboriginal fear dies out of his heart, the weird Celtic bard goes, and Wordsworth comes. Even in the Lowlands, scraps of verses still exist—relics of long past time, and shuddering yet with an obsolete terror—which are as full of a sense of the malevolence of Nature as any Highland song or tune you could produce."

"Let me hear one or two."

"Well, here is one which has been occasionally quoted, and which you have in all likelihood come across in your reading:—

'Says Tweed to Till,
What gars ye rin sae still?
Says Till to Tweed,
Though ye rin wi' speed,
An' I rin slaw,
For ae man that ye droon,
I droon twa.'"

"Yes, it is very striking, and hits the nail on the head exactly. Sir Walter quotes it somewhere, I think. I have little doubt that these rhymes suggested to Scott his Voices of the River in the 'Lay,' which is not that of the kelpie, a creature *in* the river, but of the river itself, in spiritual personation."

"That may be, or it may not. But nowhere, that

I know of, does that sense of an evil will, and an alienation from man in nature, find a profounder and more tragic, if withal a playful, half-humorous expression than in this curious little Border fragment, unless, indeed, it be beaten by this from Forfarshire. Of the Dean stream, wherein, while it was yet golden time with me, I slew many a fine trout, there existed then a local rhyme of much less artistic and literary completion than that relating the colloquy between Till and Tweed, but, as I think, in its rudeness if anything even more gruesome and grim—

> 'The dowie Dean,
> It rins it lean,
> An' every seven year it gets ean.'"

"What a hideous *patois*," quoth the Landlord, "your Forfarshire people must talk! I can't say I understand a word of your rhymes. Perhaps you will be good enough to translate"

Fellowes laughed. "I 'll do my best,—

> 'The dowie (quietly dismal) Dean,
> It rins it lean, (its lane, lone, solitary,)
> An' every seven year it gets ean, (ane, one.)'

There it is now, in Scotch and English, for you. What specially strikes me in this rhyme is its quiet power of awe, its reflex of the passionless calm,

which, in scorn of contrast with the 'fever and fret' and flux of human feeling, is the specially frightful thing in Nature. No need for the Dean to trouble itself to employ kelpies: it runs quietly, gloomily on, feeding its fine red trout, and sure that by the serene law of the case when the hour comes the man will, and will drop to his moist doom, with no trouble given. 'It gets ean' when the said 'ean' is due; and never having been disappointed, it runs on 'dowie,' and not disturbing itself, as certain of its food in season. This it plainly reckons on, somewhat as year after year we look for strawberries and new potatoes. Then, the 'It rins *it lean,' by itself*, solitary, sullen, morose, as it were, and in the deeps of its moody pools, meditating periodical unsocial mischiefs, past and to come. For haggard, imaginative suggestion, unless it be in the 'Twa Corbies,' I don't know where we can quite equal this. Beside this primal poetry of man's spiritual instinct of terror our later verse-developments are the merest nothings."

While I kept repeating over to myself the rude triplet which was new to me, and creeping as best I could into its fell significance, Pen said—

"And I suppose, in point of fact, that your gloomy hermit and murderer of a stream did get 'ean' every seven years. Don't you think only

'ean' in seven years a somewhat scant allowance? Most streams are as well supplied, I rather think."

"This septennial victim was in my boyhood considered by the natives as the toll exacted by, and fated due of the river; and I have heard the old people reckon back, over 'Jock Tamson that was drowned i' the year ——, coming hame fou frae the fair;' 'Wull Smith,' fou of course, also, who, fresh from 'the spring roup of grass parks at the Hatton in the year ——,' was unexpectedly treated to more water than he needed for his purposes of grog; and so on. The old inhabitant would then conclude with a grave—'It 's weel kent the burn 's nae canny;' and a confident prediction, with half a shudder in his voice, that 'ye 'll see it winna be lang noo till it maun get anither.' Any sceptic was at once silenced with—'Weel-a-weel—say yer say o 't the noo, and jist bide till ye see. But dinna *ye* be daunerin' doon 't yersel', neist nicht ye 're fou, or maybe, my braw man, *ye 'll no see.* I 'm no saying but ye 'll mak' a bonny corp, giff ye downa swall wi' the burn-water, yer stamack nae bein' used to 't.'"

"Your theory is correct," said the Landlord, turning to Fellowes, "that the fear of Nature is common to all races, and that as each race advances

in civilisation the terror dies out. The kelpie, for instance, always lives near a ford — bridge the stream, and the kelpie dies. Build a road across a haunted hill, and you banish the fairies of the hill for ever. The kelpie and the fairy are simply spiritual personations of very rude and common dangers—of being carried away by the current when you are attempting to cross a river—of being lost when you are taking a short cut across hills on which there is no track. Abolish the dangers, and you at the same time abolish those creatures, Fear and Fancy."

"Rhymes like these are the truest antiques, the most precious articles of *virtu*. What is the brooch or ring that the fair woman wore, the brogues in which the shepherd travelled, the sword or shield with which the warrior fought, compared with a triplet like that, which is really an authentic bit of the terror that agitated human hearts long ago?"

But while we were discussing the Dean flowing on solitarily, every gurgle silenced with expectation as the hour drew near when its seven years' hunger would be appeased, Pen and the Landlord had drifted away to the subject of the Skye railway —this summer and the last a favourite subject of discussion in the Island.

"You are a great friend of the railway?"

"Of course I am," said the Landlord. "I consider the locomotive the good wizard of our modern day. Its whistle scares away filth, mendicancy, and unthrift; ignorance and laziness perish in the glare of its red eyes. I have seen what it has done for the Hindoo, and I know what it will do for the Islesman. We hold India by our railways to-day rather than by our laws or our armies. The swart face of the stoker is the first sign of the golden age that has become visible in my time."

"What benefits do you expect the railway will bring with it to Skye?"

"It will bring us in closer contact with the South. By the aid of the railway we shall be enabled to send our stock to the southern markets more rapidly, more cheaply, and in better condition, and as a consequence we will obtain better prices. By aid of the railway the Islands will be opened up, our mineral treasures will be laid bare, our marbles will find a market, the Skye apple and the Skye strawberry will be known in Covent Garden, our fisheries will flourish as they have never flourished before. The railway will bring southern capital to us, and humane southern influences. The railway will send an electric shock through the entire Island. Everybody's pulse will be quickened; the

turf-hut will disappear; and the Skyeman will no longer be considered a lazy creature: which he is not—he only seems so because he has never found a proper field for the display of his activities. There are ten chances to one that your Skye lad, if left *in* Skye, will remain a fisherman or a shepherd; but transplant him to Glasgow, Liverpool, or London, and he not unfrequently blossoms into a merchant prince. There were quick and nimble brains under the shock heads of the lads you saw at my school the other day, and to each of these lads the railway will open a career great or small, or, at all events, the chance of one."

When the Landlord had ceased speaking, a boy brought the post-bag and laid it down on the gravel. It was opened, and we got our letters—the Landlord a number of Indian ones. These he put into his coat pocket. One he tore open and read. "Hillo, Pen!" he cried, when he got to the end, "my emigrants are to be at Skeabost on Thursday; we must go over to see them." Then he marched into the house, and in a little time thereafter our smoking parliament dissolved.

THE EMIGRANTS.

THE English emigrant is prosaic; Highland and Irish emigrants are poetical. How is this? The wild-rose lanes of England, one would think, are as bitter to part from, and as worthy to be remembered at the antipodes, as the wild coasts of Skye or the green hills of Ireland. Oddly enough, poet and painter turn a cold shoulder on the English emigrant, while they expend infinite pathos on the emigrants from Erin or the Highlands. The Highlander has his Lochaber-no-more, and the Irishman has the Countess of Gifford's pretty song. The ship in the offing, and the parting of Highland emigrants on the sea-shore, have been made the subject of innumerable paintings; and yet there is a sufficient reason for it all. Young man and maid are continually parting; but unless the young man and maid are lovers, the farewell-taking has no attraction for the singer or the artist. Without the laceration of love, without some tumult of sorrowful emotion, a parting is the most prosaic thing in the world; with these it is perhaps

the most affecting. "Good-bye" serves for the one; the most sorrowful words of the poet are hardly sufficient for the other. Rightly or wrongly, it is popularly understood that the English emigrant is not mightily moved by regret when he beholds the shores that gave him birth withdrawing themselves into the dimness of the far horizon,—although, if true, why it should be so? and if false, how it has crept into the common belief? are questions not easy to answer. If the Englishman is obtuse and indifferent in this respect, the Highlander is not. He has a cat-like love for locality. He finds it as difficult to part from the faces of the familiar hills as from the faces of his neighbours. In the land of his adoption he cherishes the language, the games, and the songs of his childhood; and he thinks with a continual sadness of the gray-green slopes of Lochaber, and the thousand leagues of dim, heart-breaking sea tossing between them and him.

The Celt clings to his birthplace, as the ivy nestles lovingly to its wall; the Saxon is like the arrowy seeds of the dandelion, that travel on the wind and strike root afar. This simply means that the one race has a larger imagination than the other, and an intenser feeling of association. Emigration *is* more painful to the Highlander than it is to the Englishman—this poet and painter

have instinctively felt—and in wandering up and down Skye you come into contact with this pain, either fresh or in reminiscence, not unfrequently. Although the member of his family be years removed, the Skyeman lives in him imaginatively—just as the man who has endured an operation is for ever conscious of the removed limb. And this horror of emigration—common to the entire Highlands—has been increased by the fact that it has not unfrequently been a forceful matter, that potent landlords have torn down houses and turned out the inhabitants, have authorised evictions, have deported the dwellers of entire glens. That the landlords so acting have not been without grounds of justification may in all probability be true. The deported villagers may have been cumberers of the ground, they may have been unable to pay rent, they may have been slowly but surely sinking into pauperism, their prospect of securing a comfortable subsistence in the colonies may be considerable, while in their own glens it may be *nil*, —all this may be true; but to have your house unroofed before your eyes, and made to go on board a ship bound for Canada, even although the passage-money be paid for you, is not pleasant. An obscure sense of wrong is kindled in heart and brain. It is just possible that what is

for the landlord's interest may be for yours also in the long run; but you feel that the landlord has looked after his own interest in the first place. He wished you away, and he has got you away; whether you will succeed in Canada is matter of dubiety. The human gorge rises at this kind of forceful banishment—more particularly the gorge of the banished!

When Thursday came, the Landlord drove us over to Skeabost, at which place, at noon, the emigrants were to assemble. He told me on the way that some of the more sterile portions of his property were over-populated, and that the people there could no more prosper than trees that have been too closely planted. He was consequently a great advocate of emigration. He maintained that force should never be used, but advice and persuasion only; that when consent was obtained, there should be held out a helping hand. It was his idea that if a man went all the way to Canada to oblige you, it was but fair that you should make his journey as pleasant as possible, and provide him employment, or, at all events, put him in the way of obtaining it when he got there. In Canada, consequently, he purchased lands, made these lands over to a resident relative, and to the charge of that relative, who had erected houses, and

who had trees to fell, and fields to plough, and cattle to look after, he consigned his emigrants. He took care that they were safely placed on shipboard at Glasgow or Liverpool, and his relative was in waiting when they arrived. When the friendly face died on this side of the Atlantic, a new friendly face dawned on them on the other. With only one class of tenant was he inclined to be peremptory. He had no wish to disturb in their turf-hut the old man and woman who had brought up a family ; but when the grown-up son brought home a wife to the same hut, he was down upon them, like a severing knife, at once. The young people could not remain there; they might go where they pleased ; he would rather they would go to Canada than anywhere, but out of the old dwelling they must march. And the young people frequently jumped at the Landlord's offer—labour and good wages calling sweetly to them from across the sea. The Landlord had already sent out a troop of emigrants, of whose condition and prospects he had the most encouraging accounts, both from themselves and others, and the second troop were that day to meet him at Skeabost.

When we got to Skeabost there were the emigrants, to the number perhaps of fifty or sixty,

seated on the lawn. They were dressed as was their wont on Sundays, when prepared for church. The men wore suits of blue or gray kelt, the women were wrapped for the most part in tartan plaids. They were decent, orderly, intelligent, and on the faces of most was a certain resolved look, as if they had carefully considered the matter, and had made up their minds to go through with it. They were of every variety of age too; the greater proportion young men who had long years of vigorous work in them, who would fell many a tree, and reap many a field before their joints stiffened: women, fresh, comely, and strong, not yet mothers, but who would be grandmothers before their term of activity was past. In the party, too, was a sprinkling of middle-aged people, with whom the world had gone hardly, and who were hoping that Canada would prove kinder than Skye. They all rose and saluted the Landlord respectfully as we drove down toward the house. The porch was immediately made a hall of audience. The Landlord sat in a chair, Pen took his seat at the table, and opened a large scroll-book in which the names of the emigrants were inscribed. One by one the people came from the lawn to the porch and made known their requirements:—a man had not yet

made up his passage-money, and required an advance; a woman desired a pair of blankets; an old man wished the Landlord to buy his cow, which was about to calve, and warranted an excellent milker. With each of these the Landlord talked sometimes in Gaelic, more frequently in English; entered into the circumstances of each, and commended, rebuked, expostulated, as occasion required. When an emigrant had finished his story, and made his bargain with the Landlord, Pen wrote the conditions thereof against his or her name in the large scroll-book. The giving of audience began about noon, and it was evening before it was concluded. By that time every emigrant had been seen, talked with, and disposed of. For each the way to Canada was smoothed, and the terms set down by Pen in his scroll-book; and each, as he went away, was instructed to hold himself in readiness on the 15th of the following month, for on that day they were to depart.

When the emigrants were gone we smoked on the lawn, with the moon rising behind us. Next morning our party broke up. Fellowes and the Landlord went off in the mail to Inverness; the one to resume his legal reading there, the other to catch the train for London. Pen went to Bracadale, where he had some business to transact pre-

paratory to going to Ireland, and I drove in to Portree to meet the southward-going steamer, for vacation was over, and my Summer in Skye had come to an end.

HOMEWARDS.

LIFE is pleasant, but unfortunately one has got to die; vacation is delightful, but unhappily vacations come to an end. Mine had come to an end; and sitting in the inn at Portree waiting for the southward-going steamer, I began to count up my practical and ideal gains, just as in dirty shillings and half-crowns a cobbler counts up his of a Saturday night.

In the first place, I was a gainer in health. When I came up here a month or two ago I was tired, jaded, ill at ease. I put spots in the sun, I flecked the loveliest blue of summer sky with bars of darkness. I felt the weight of the weary hours. Each morning called me as a slave-driver calls a slave. In sleep there was no refreshment, for in dream the weary day repeated itself yet more wearily. I was nervous, apprehensive of evil, irritable—ill, in fact. Now I had the appetite of an ostrich, I laughed at dyspepsia; I could have regulated my watch by my pulse; and all the dusty, book-lettered, and be-cobwebbed chambers

of my brain had been tidied and put to rights by the fairies Wonder, Admiration, Beauty, Freshness. Soul and body were braced alike—into them had gone something of the peace of the hills and the strength of the sea. I had work to do, and I was able to enjoy work. Here there was one gain, very palpable and appreciable. Then by my wanderings up and down, I had made solitude for ever less irksome, because I had covered the walls of my mind with a variety of new pictures. The poorest man may have a picture-gallery in his memory which he would not exchange for the Louvre. In the picture-gallery of my memory there hung Blaavin, the Cuchullins, Loch Coruisk, Dunsciach, Duntulm, Lord Macdonald's deer-forest, Glen Sligachan, and many another place and scene besides. Here was a gain quite as palpable and appreciable as the other. The pictures hung in the still room of memory, and to them I could turn for refreshment in dull or tedious hours; and carrying that still room with its pictures about with me wherever I went, I could enter and amuse myself at any time—whether waiting at a station for a laggard train, or sitting under a dull preacher on a hot Sunday afternoon. Then, again, I had been brought into contact with peculiar individuals, which is in itself an intellectual stimulus,

in so far as one is continually urged to enter into, explore, and understand them. What a new variety of insect is to an entomologist, that a new variety of man is to one curious in men, who delights to brood over them, to comprehend them, to distinguish the shades of difference that exist between them, and, if possible, sympathetically to *be* them. This sympathy enables a man in his lifetime to lead fifty lives. I don't think in the south I shall ever find the counterparts of John Kelly, Lachlan Roy, or Angus-with-the-dogs. I am certain I shall never encounter a nobler heart than that which has beat for so long a term in the frame of Mr M'Ian, nor a wiser or humaner brain than the Landlord's. Even to have met the tobacco-less man was something on which speculation could settle. Then, in the matter of gain, one may fairly count up the being brought into contact with songs, stories, and superstitions; for through means of these one obtains access into the awe and terror that lay at the heart of that ancient Celtic life which is fast disappearing now. Old songs illustrate the spiritual moods of a people, just as old weapons, agricultural implements, furniture, and domestic dishes, illustrate the material conditions. I delighted to range through that spiritual antiquarian museum, and to take up and examine the bits of human love, and

FIRTH OF CLYDE FROM ABOVE LARGS. ARRAN IN THE DISTANCE

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terror, and hate, that lay fossilised there. All these things were gains: and waiting at Portree for the steamer, and thinking over them all, I concluded that my Summer in Skye had not been misspent; and that no summer can be misspent anywhere, provided the wanderer brings with him a quick eye, an open ear, and a sympathetic spirit. It is the cunningest harper that draws the sweetest music from the harp-string; but no musician that ever played has exhausted all the capacities of his instrument—there is more to take for him who can take.

The *Clansman* reached Portree Bay at eleven P.M., and I went on board at once and went to bed. When I awoke next morning, the engines were in full action, and I could hear the rush of the water past my berth. When I got on deck we were steaming down the Sound of Raasay; and when breakfast-time arrived, it needed but a glance to discover that autumn had come and that the sporting season was well-nigh over. A lot of sheep were penned up near the bows, amidships were piles of wool, groups of pointers and setters were scattered about, and at the breakfast-table were numerous sportsmen returning to the south, whose conversation ran on grouse-shooting, salmon-fishing, and deer-stalking. While breakfast was

proceeding you saw everywhere sun-browned faces, heard cheery voices, and witnessed the staying of prodigious appetites. Before these stalwart fellows steaks, chops, platefuls of ham and eggs disappeared as if by magic. The breakfast party, too, consisted of all orders and degrees of men. There were drovers going to, or returning from markets; merchants from Stornoway going south; a couple of Hebridean clergymen, one of whom said grace; several military men of frank and hearty bearing; an extensive brewer; three members of Parliament, who had entirely recovered from the fatigues of legislation; and a tall and handsome English Earl of some repute on the turf. Several ladies, too, dropped in before the meal was over. We were all hungry, and fed like Homer's heroes. The brewer was a valiant trencher-man, and the handsome Earl entombed cold pie to an extent unprecedented in my experience. The commissariat on board the Highland steamers is plentiful and of quality beyond suspicion; and the conjunction of good viands, and appetites whetted by the sea-breeze, results in a play of knife and fork perfectly wonderful to behold. When breakfast was over we all went up stairs; the smoking men resorted to the hurricane deck, the two clergymen read, the merchants from Stornoway wandered uneasily about

as if seeking some one to whom they could attach themselves, and the drovers smoked short pipes amidships, and talked to the passengers there, and when their pipes were out went forward to examine the sheep. The morning and forenoon wore away pleasantly—the great ceremony of dinner was ahead, and drawing nearer every moment—that was something—and then there were frequent stoppages, and the villages on the shore, the coming and going of boats with cargo and passengers, the throwing out of empty barrels here, the getting in of wool there, were incidents quite worthy of the regard of idle men leading for the time being a mere life of the senses. We stopped for a couple of hours in Broadford Bay—we stopped at Kyle-akin—we stopped at Balmacara; and the long-looked-for dinner was served after we had past Kyle-Rhea, and were gliding down into Glenelg. For some little time previously savoury steams had assailed our nostrils. We saw the stewards descending into the cabin with covered dishes, and at the first sound of the bell the hurricane deck, crowded a moment before, was left entirely empty. The captain took his seat at the head of the table with a mighty roast before him, the clergyman said grace—somewhat lengthily, I fear, in the opinion of most—the covers were lifted away by

deft waiters, and we dined that day at four as if we had not previously breakfasted at eight, and lunched at one. Dinner was somewhat protracted; for as we had nothing to do after the ladies went, we sat over cheese and wine, and then talk grew animated over whisky-punch. When I went on deck again we had passed Knock, and were steaming straight for Armadale. The Knoydart hills were on the one side, the low shores of Sleat, patched here and there by strips of cultivation, on the other; and in a little we saw the larch plantations of Armadale, and the castle becoming visible through the trees on the lawn.

In autumn the voyage to the south is lengthened by stoppages, and frequently the steamer has to leave her direct course and thread long inland running lochs to take wool on board. These stoppages and wanderings out of the direct route would be annoying if you were hurrying south to be married, or if you were summoned to the deathbed of a friend from whom you had expectations; but as it is holiday with you, and as every divergence brings you into unexpected scenery, they are regarded rather as a pleasure than anything else. At Armadale we stayed for perhaps half an hour, and then struck directly across the Sound of Sleat, and sailed up the wind-

ings of Loch Nevis. When we reached the top there was an immense to-do on the beach; some three or four boats laden with wool were already pulling out towards the steamer, which immediately lay to and let off noisy steam; men were tumbling bales of wool into the empty boats that lay at the stony pier, and to the pier laden carts were hurrying down from the farm-house that stood remote. The wool boats came on either side of the steamer; doors were opened in the bulwarks, to these doors steam cranes were wheeled, and with many a shock of crank and rattle of loosened chain, the bales were hoisted on deck and consigned to the gloomy recesses of the hold. As soon as a boat was emptied, a laden one pulled out to take its place; the steam cranes were kept continually jolting and rattling, and in the space of a couple of hours a considerable amount of business had been done. On the present occasion the transference of wool from the boats to the hold of the steamer occupied a longer time than was usual; sunset had come in crimson and died away to pale gold and rose, and still the laden boats came slowly on, still storms of Gaelic execration surged along the sides of the ship, and still the steam cranes were at their noisy work. The whole affair, having by this time lost all sense of novelty, was in danger of becoming

tiresome, but in the fading light the steward had lighted up the saloon into hospitable warmth and glow, and then the bell rang for tea. In a moment all interest in the wool boats had come to an end, the passengers hurried below, and before the tinklings of cup and saucer had ceased, the last bale of wool had been transferred from the boats alongside to the hold, and the *Clansman* had turned round, and was softly gliding down Loch Nevis.

A lovely, transparent autumn night arched above us, a young moon and single star by her side, when we reached Arisaig. By this time the ladies had retired, and those of the gentlemen who remained on deck were wrapped in plaids, each shadowy figure brought out more keenly by the red tip of a cigar. The entrance into Arisaig is difficult, and the *Clansman* was put on half steam. The gentlemen were requested to leave the hurricane-deck, and there the captain stationed himself, while a couple of men were sent to the bows, and three or four stationed at the wheel. Slowly the large vessel moved onward, with low black reefs of rocks on either side, like smears of dark colour, but perfectly soft and tender in outline; and every here and there we could see the dark top of a rock peering out of the dim sea like a beaver's head.

From these shadowy reefs, as the vessel moved on, the sea-birds were awaked from their slumbers, and strangely sweet, and liquid as flute-notes, were their cries and signals of alarm. Every now and again, too, with a sort of weary sigh, a big wave came heaving in, and broke over the dark reefs in cataracts of ghostly silver; and in the watery trouble and movement that followed, the moon became a well of moving light, and the star a quivering sword-blade. The captain stood alone on the hurricane deck, the passengers leaned against the bulwarks watching rock and sea, and listening to the call and re-call of disturbed mews, when suddenly there was a muffled shout from the outlook at the bows, the captain shouted "Port! port! *hard!*" and away went the wheel spinning, the stalwart fellows toiling at the spokes, and the ship slowly falling off. After a little while there was another noise at the bows, the captain shouted "Starboard!" and the wheel was rapidly reversed. We were now well up the difficult channel; and looking back we could see a perfect intricacy of reefs and dim single rocks behind, and a fading belt of pallor wandering amongst them, which told the track of the ship—a dreadful place to be driven upon on a stormy night, when the whole coast would be like the mouth of a wounded boar—black tusks

and churning foam. After a while, however, a low line of coast became visible, then a light broke upon it; and after a few impatient turns of the paddles we beheld a dozen boats approaching, with lights at their bows. These were the Arisaig boats, laden with cargo. At sight of them the captain left the hurricane deck, the anchor went away with a thundering chain, the passengers went to bed, and between asleep and awake, I could hear half the night the trampling of feet, the sound of voices, and the jolt of the steam-cranes, as the Arisaig goods were being hoisted on deck and stowed away.

I was up early next morning. The sky was clear, the wind blowing on shore, and the bright, living, rejoicing sea came seething in on the rocky intricacies through which we slowly sailed. Skye was perfectly visible, the nearer shores dark and green; farther back the dim Cuchullins, standing in the clouds. Eig rose opposite, with its curiously-shaped sciur; Muck lay ahead. The *Clansman* soon reached the open sea, and we began to feel the impulse of the Atlantic. By the time the passengers began to appear on deck the ship was lurching heavily along towards the far-stretching headland of Ardnamurchan. It was difficult to keep one's feet steady—more difficult to keep steady one's brain.

Great glittering watery mounds came heaving on, to wash with unavailing foam the rocky coast; and amongst these the steamer rolled and tossed and groaned, its long dark pennon of smoke streaming with the impulse of the sea. The greater proportion of the passengers crawled amidships—beside the engines and the cook's quarters, which were redolent with the scent of herrings frying for a most unnecessary breakfast—for there the motion was least felt. To an unhappy landsman that morning the whole world seemed topsy-turvy. There was no straight line to be discovered anywhere; everything seemed to have changed places. Now you beheld the steersman against the sky on the crest of an airy acclivity, now one bulwark was buried in surge, now the other, and anon the sheep at the bows were brought out against a foamy cataract. But with all this turmoil and dancing and rolling, the *Clansman* went swiftly on, and in due time we were off the Ardnamurchan lighthouse. Here we rolled and tossed in an unpleasant manner,—the smitten foam springing to the top of the rocks and falling back in snowy sheets,—and seemed to make but little progress. Gradually, however, the lighthouse began to draw slowly behind us, slowly we rounded the rocky buttress, slowly the dark shores of Mull drew out

to sea, and in a quarter of an hour, with dripping decks and giddy brains, we had passed from the great bright heave and energy of the Atlantic to the quiet waters of Loch Sunart; and, sheltered by Mull, were steaming towards Tobermory.

The first appearance of Tobermory is prepossessing; but further acquaintance is if possible to be eschewed. As the *Clansman* steams into the bay, the little town, with its half circle of white houses, backed by hill terraces on which pretty villas are perched, and flanked by sombre pine plantations, is a pleasant picture, and takes heart and eye at once. As you approach, however, your admiration is lessened, and when you go ashore quite obliterated. It has a "most ancient and fish-like smell," and all kinds of refuse float in the harbour. Old ocean is a scavenger at Tobermory, and is as dirty in his habits as Father Thames himself. The houses look pretty and clean when seen from the steamer's deck, but on a nearer view they deteriorate and become squalid, and several transform themselves into small inns, suggestive of the worst accommodation and the fiercest alcohol. The steamer is usually detained at Tobermory for a couple of hours, and during all that time there is a constant noise of lading and unlading. You become tired of the noise and

tumult, and experience a sense of relief when steam is got up again, and with much backing and turning and churning of dirty harbour water into questionable foam, the large vessel works its way through the difficult channel, and slides calmly down the Sound of Mull.

Gliding down that magnificent Sound, the "Lord of the Isles" is in your memory, just as the "Lady of the Lake" is in your memory at Loch Katrine. The hours float past in music. All the scenes of the noble poem rise in vision before you. You pass the entrance to the beautiful Loch Aline; you pass Ardtornish Castle on the Morven shore, where the Lords of the Isles held their rude parliaments and discussed ways and means; while opposite, Mull draws itself grandly back into lofty mountains. Further down you see Duart Castle, with the rock peering above the tide, on which Maclean exposed his wife—a daughter of Argyle's—to the throttling of the waves. After passing Duart, Mull trends away to the right, giving you a space of open sun-bright sea, while on the left the Linnhe Loch stretches toward Fort-William and Ben Nevis. Straight before you is the green Lismore—long a home of Highland learning—and passing it, while the autumn day is wearing towards afternoon, you reach Oban,

sheltered from western waves by the island of Kerrera.

The longest delay during the passage is at Oban, but then we had dinner there, which helped to kill the time in a pleasant way. The *Clansman* had received a quantity of cargo at Tobermory, at Loch Aline a flock of sheep were driven on board, goods were taken in plentifully at other places in the Sound at which we touched, and when we had received all the stuffs waiting for us at Oban, the vessel was heavily laden. The entire steerage deck was a bellowing and bleating mass of black cattle and sheep, each "parcel" divided from the other by temporary barriers. The space amidships was a chaos of barrels and trunks and bales of one kind or another, and amongst these the steerage passengers were forced to dispose themselves. Great piles of wooden boxes containing herring were laid along the cabin deck, so that if a man were disposed to walk about it behoved him to take care of his footsteps. But who cared! We were away from Oban now, the wind was light, the sun setting behind us, and the bell ringing for tea. It was the last meal we were to have together, and through some consciousness of this the ice of reserve seemed to melt, and the passengers to draw closer to each other. The

Hebridean clergymen unbent; the handsome earl chatted to his neighbours as if his forehead had never known the golden clasp of the coronet; the sporting men stalked their stags over again; the members of Parliament discussed every subject except the affairs of the nation; the rich brewer joked; the merchants from Stornoway laughed immoderately; while the cattle-dealers listened with awe. Tea was prolonged after this pleasant fashion, and then, while the Stornoway merchants and the cattle-dealers solaced themselves with a tumbler of punch, the majority of the other passengers went up stairs to the hurricane deck to smoke. What a boon is tobacco to the modern Englishman! It stands in place of wife, child, profession, and the interchange of ideas. With a pipe in your mouth indifference to your neighbour is no longer churlish, and silent rumination becomes the most excellent companionship. The English were never very great talkers, but since Sir Walter Raleigh introduced the Virginian weed they have talked less than ever. Smoking parliaments are always silent —and as in silence there is wisdom, they are perhaps more effective than the talking ones. Mr Carlyle admired those still smoke-wreathed Prussian assemblies of Frederick's, and I am astonished that he does not advocate the use of the

weed in our English Witenagemote. Slowly the night fell around the smokers, the stars came out in the soft sky, as the air grew chill, and one by one they went below. Then there was more toddy-drinking, some playing at chess, one or two attempts at letter-writing, and at eleven o'clock the waiters cleared the tables, and began to transform the saloon into a large sleeping apartment.

I climbed up to my berth and fell comfortably asleep. I must have been asleep for several hours, although of the lapse of time I was of course unconscious, when gradually the horror of nightmare fell upon me. This horror was vague and formless at first, but gradually it assumed a definite shape. I was Mazeppa, they had bound me on the back of the desert-born, and the mighty brute, maddened with pain and terror, was tearing along the wilderness, crashing through forests, plunging into streams, with the howling of wolves close behind and coming ever nearer. At last, when the animal cleared a ravine at a bound, I burst the bondage of my dream. For a moment I could not understand where I was. The sleeping apartment seemed to have fallen on one side, then it righted itself, but only to fall over on the other, then it made a wild plunge forward as if it were a living thing and had

received a lash. The ship was labouring heavily, I heard the voices of the sailors flying in the wind, I felt the shock of solid, and the swish of broken seas. In such circumstances sleep, for me at least, was impossible, so I slipped out of bed, and, steadying myself for a favourable moment, made a grab at my clothes. With much difficulty I dressed, with greater difficulty I got into my boots, and then I staggered on deck. Holding on by the first support, I was almost blinded by the glare of broken seas. From a high coast against which the great waves rushed came the steady glare of a lighthouse, and by that token I knew we were "on" the Mull of Cantyre. The ship was fuming through a mighty battle of tides. Shadowy figures of steerage passengers were to be seen clinging here and there. One—a young woman going to Glasgow as a housemaid, as she afterwards told me—was in great distress, was under the impression that we were all going to the bottom, and came to me for comfort. I quieted her as best I could, and procured her a seat. Once when the ship made a wild lurch, and a cloud of spray came flying over the deck, she exclaimed to a sailor who was shuffling past wearing a sou'-wester and canvas overalls, "O sailor, is 't ever sae bad as this?" "As bad as this," said the worthy,

poising himself on the unsteady deck, "as bad as this! Lod, ye sud jist a seen oor last vi'age. There was only three besides mysel o' the ship's crew able to haud on by a rape." Delivering himself of this scrap of dubious comfort, the sailor shuffled onward. Happily the turmoil was not of long duration. In an hour we had rounded the formidable Mull, had reached comparatively smooth water, and with the lights of Campbelton behind, the pallid glare of furnaces seen afar on the Ayrshire coast, and the morning beginning to pencil softly the east, I went below again, and slept till we reached Greenock.

GLASGOW.

THE idea of Glasgow in the ordinary British mind is probably something like the following:—"Glasgow, believed by the natives to be the second city of the empire, is covered by a smoky canopy through which rain penetrates, but which is impervious to sunbeam. It is celebrated for every kind of industrial activity: it is fervent in business six days of the week, and spends the seventh in hearing sermon and drinking toddy. Its population consists of a great variety of classes. The 'operative,' quiet and orderly enough while plentifully supplied with provisions, becomes a Chartist when hungry, and extracts great satisfaction in listening to orators—mainly from the Emerald Isle—declaiming against a bloated aristocracy. The 'merchant prince,' known to all ends of the earth, and subject sometimes to strange vagaries; at one moment he is glittering away cheerily in the commercial heaven, the next he has disappeared, like the lost Pleiad, swallowed up of night for ever. The history of Glasgow may be summed

up in one word—cotton ; its deity, gold ; its river, besung by poets, a sewer; its environs, dust and ashes; the *gamin* of its wynds and closes less tinctured by education than a Bosjesman; a creature that has never heard a lark sing save perhaps in a cage outside a window in the sixth story, where a consumptive seamstress is rehearsing the 'Song of the Shirt,' 'the swallows with their sunny backs' omitted." Now this idea of Glasgow is entirely wrong. It contains many cultivated men and women. It is the seat of an ancient university. Its cathedral is the noblest in Scotland ; and its statue of Sir John Moore the finest statue in the empire. It is not in itself an ugly city, and it has many historical associations. Few cities are surrounded by prettier scenery ; and of late years it has produced two books—both authors dead now—one of which mirrors the old hospitable, social life of the place, while the other pleasantly sketches the interesting localities in its neighbourhood. Dr Strang, in his "Clubs of Glasgow," brings us in contact with the old jolly times ; and Mr Macdonald, in his "Rambles round Glasgow," visits, stick in hand, every spot of interest to be found for miles around, knows every ruin and its legend, can tell where each unknown poet has lived and died, and has the martyrology of the district at his fingers' ends. So much for

the books; and now a word or two concerning their authors.

Dr Strang was long chamberlain to the city of Glasgow; for more than half a century he saw it growing around him, increasing in population, wealth, and political importance, as during the same period no other British city had increased; and as he knew everything concerning that growth, he not unnaturally took in it the deepest pride. He could remember the old times, the old families, the old buildings, the old domestic habits; and when well-stricken in years, it pleased him to recall the matters which he remembered, and to contrast them with what he saw on every side. I think that on the whole he preferred the old Glasgow of his boyhood to the new Glasgow of his age. All his life he had a turn for literature; in his earlier day he had written stories and sketches, in which he mirrored as vividly as he could the older aspects of the city; and as, along with this turn for writing, he had that antiquarian taste which has been a characteristic of almost every distinguished Scotsman since Sir Walter, while his years and his official position gave him opportunities of gratifying it, he knew Glasgow almost as well as the oldest inhabitant, who has been a bailie and cog-

nisant of all secrets, knows his native village. He was an admirable *cicerone;* his mind was continually pacing up and down the local last century, knowing every person he met as he knew his contemporary acquaintances; and when he spoke of the progress of Glasgow, he spoke proudly, as if he were recounting the progress of his own son. During the last years of his life, it struck him that he might turn his local knowledge to account. The Doctor was a humorist; he was fond of anecdote, had a very proper regard for good eating and drinking; he remembered regretfully the rum-punch of his youth, and he was deeply versed in the histories of the Glasgow Clubs. In a happy hour, it occurred to him that if he told the story of those clubs—described the professors, the merchants, the magistrates, the local bigwigs, the clergymen, the rakes, who composed their memberships—he would go to the very core and essence of old Glasgow Society; while in the course of his work he would find opportunities of using what antiquarian knowledge he had amassed concerning old houses, old social habits, the state of trade at different periods, and the like. The idea was a happy one; the Doctor set to work valiantly, and in course of time in a spacious volume, with suitable index and appendix, the "Clubs of Glasgow"

was before the world. Never, perhaps, has so good a book been so badly written. The book is interesting, but interesting in virtue of the excellence of the material, not of the literary execution. Yet, on the whole, it may fairly be considered sufficient. You open its pages, and step from the Present into the Past. You are in the Trongate, through which Prince Charles has just ridden. You see Virginian merchants pacing to and fro with scarlet cloaks and gold-headed sticks; you see belle and beau walk a minuet in the Old Assembly-Room; you see flushed Tom and Jerry lock an asthmatic "Charlie" in his sentry-box, and roll him down a declivity into the river—all gone long ago, like the rum-punch which they brewed, like the limes with which they flavoured it!

Mr Macdonald is Dr Strang's antithesis, and yet his complement. The one worked in antiquarianism and statistics; the other in antiquarianism and poetry. The one loved the old houses, the old hedges, the old churchyards within the city; the other loved these things without the city and miles away from it—and so between them both we have the district very fairly represented. Mr Macdonald was a man of genius, a song-writer, an antiquary, a devout lover of beast and bird, of snowdrop and lucken-gowan, of the sun setting on Both-

well Bank, of the moon shining down on Clydesdale barley fields. He was in his degree one of those poets who have, since Burns's time, made nearly every portion of Scotland vocal. Just as Tannahill has made Gleniffer hills greener by his songs, as Thom of Inverury has lent a new interest to the banks of the Dee, as Scott Riddell has added a note to the Border Minstrelsy, has Mr Macdonald taken poetic possession of the country around Glasgow. Neither for him nor for any of his compeers can the title of great poet be claimed. These men are local poets; but if you know and love the locality, you thankfully accept the songs with which they have associated them. If the scenery of a shire is gentle, it is fitting that the poet of the shire should possess a genius to match. Great scenes demand great poems; simple scenes, simple ones. Coleridge's hymn in the Vale of Chamouni is a noble performance, but out of place if uttered in a Lanarkshire glen where sheep are feeding, and where you may search the horizon in vain for an elevation of five hundred feet. Mr Macdonald could not have approached Coleridge's hymn had he been placed in Chamouni; but he has done justice to the scenery that surrounded him—made the ivies of Crookston more sombre with his verse, and yet more splendid

the westward-running Clyde in which the sun is setting

He was one of those, too—of whom Scotchmen are specially proud—who, born in humble circumstances, and with no aid from college, and often but little from school, do achieve some positive literary result, and recognition more or less for the same. He was born in one of the eastern districts of Glasgow, lived for some time in the Island of Mull, in the house of a relative—for, as his name imports, he was a pure Celt—and from his sires he drew song, melancholy, and superstition. The superstition he never could completely shake off. He could laugh at a ghost story, could deck it out with grotesque or humorous exaggeration; but the central terror glared upon him through all disguises, and, hearing or relating, his blood was running chill the while. Returning to his native city, he was entered an apprentice in a public manufactory, and here it was—fresh from ruined castle, mist folding on the Morven Hills, tales told by mountain shepherd or weather-beaten fisherman of corpse lights glimmering on the sea; with English literature in which to range and take delight in golden shreds of leisure; and with everything, past Highland experience and present dim environment, beginning to be overspread by the

"purple light of love"—that Mr Macdonald became a poet. Considering the matter now, it may be said that his circumstances were not unfavourable to the development of the poetic spirit. Glasgow at the period spoken of could boast of her poets. Dugald Moore was writing odes to "Earthquake" and "Eclipse," and getting quizzed by his companions. Motherwell, the author of "Jeanie Morrison," was editor of the *Courier*, and in its columns fighting manfully against Reform. Alexander Rodger, who disgusted Sir Walter by the publication of a wicked and witty welcome—singular in likeness and contrast to the Magician's own—on the occasion of the visit of his gracious Majesty George IV. to Edinburgh, was filling the newspapers of the west with satirical verses, and getting himself into trouble thereby. Nay, more, this same Alexander Rodger, either then or at a later period, held a post in the manufactory in which Mr Macdonald was apprentice. Nor was the eye without education, or memory without associations to feed upon. Before the door of this manufactory stood Glasgow Green, the tree yet putting forth its leaves under which Prince Charles stood when he reviewed his shoeless Highland host before marching to Falkirk. Near the window, and to be seen by the boy every time he lifted his

head from work, flowed the Clyde, bringing recollections of the red ruins of Bothwell Castle, where the Douglases dwelt, and the ivy-muffled walls of Blantyre Priory where the monks prayed; carrying imagination with it as it flowed seaward to Dumbarton Castle, with its Ossianic associations, and recalling, as it sank into ocean, the night when Bruce from his lair in Arran watched the beacon broadening on the Carrick shore. And from the same windows, looking across the stream, he could see the long straggling burgh of Rutherglen, with the church tower which saw the bargain struck with Menteith for the betrayal of Wallace, standing eminent above the trees. And when we know that the girl who was afterwards to become his wife was growing up there, known and loved at the time, one can fancy how often his eyes dwelt on the little town, with church tower and chimney, fretting the sky-line. And when he rambled—and he always *did* ramble—inevitably deeper impulses would come to him. Northward from Glasgow a few miles, at Rob Royston, where Wallace was betrayed, lived Walter Watson, whose songs have been sung by many who never heard his name. Seven miles southward from the city lay Paisley in its smoke, and beyond that, Gleniffer Braes—scarcely changed since Tannahill walked

over them on summer evenings. South-east stretched the sterile district of the Mearns, with plovers, and heather, and shallow, glittering lakes; and beyond, in a green crescent embracing the sea, lay a whole Ayrshire, fiery and full of Burns, every stock and stone passionate with him, his daisy blooming in every furrow, every stream as it ran seaward mourning for Highland Mary—and when night fell, in every tavern in the county the blithest lads in Christendie sitting over their cups, and flouting the horned moon hanging in the window pane. And then, to complete a poetic education, there was Glasgow herself—black river flowing between two glooms of masts—the Trongate's all-day roar of traffic, and at night the faces of the hurrying crowds brought out keenly for a moment in the light of the shop windows—the miles of stony streets, with statues in the squares and open spaces—the grand Cathedral, filled once with Popish shrines and rolling incense, on one side of the ravine, and on the other, John Knox on his pillar, impeaching it with outstretched arm that clasps a Bible. And ever as the darkness came, the district north-east and south of the city was filled with shifting glare and gloom of furnace fires; instead of night and its privacy, the splendour of towering flame brought

to the inhabitants of the eastern and southern streets a fluctuating scarlet day, piercing nook and cranny as searchingly as any sunlight—making a candle needless to the housewife as she darned stockings for the children, and turning to a perfect waste of charm, the blush on a sweetheart's cheek. With all these things around him, Mr Macdonald set himself sedulously to work, and whatever may be the value of his poetic wares, plenty of excellent material lay around him on every side.

To him all these things had their uses. He had an excellent literary digestion, capable of extracting nutriment from the toughest materials. He assiduously made acquaintance with English literature in the evenings, gradually taking possession of the British essayists, poets, and historians. During this period, too, he cherished republican feelings, and had his own speculations concerning the regeneration of the human race. At this time the splendid promise of Chartism made glorious the horizon, and Macdonald, like so many of his class conceived that the "five pints" were the *avant-couriers* of the millennium. For him, in a very little while, Chartism went out like a theatrical sun. He no longer entertained the idea that he could to any perceptible extent aid in the regene-

ration of the race. Indeed, it is doubtful whether, in his latter days, he cared much whether the race would ever be regenerated. Man was a rascal, had ever been a rascal, and a rascal he would remain till the end of the chapter. He was willing to let the world wag, certified that the needful thing was to give regard to his own private footsteps. His own personal hurt made him forget the pained world. He was now fairly embarked on the poetic tide. His name, appended to copies of verses, frequently appeared in the local prints, and gained no small amount of local notice. At intervals some song-bird of his brain of stronger pinion or gayer plumage than usual would flit from newspaper to newspaper across the country ; nay, several actually appeared beyond the Atlantic, and, not unnoticed by admiring eyes, perched on a broadsheet here and there, as they made their way from the great cities towards the Western clearings. All this time, too, he was an enthusiastic botanist in book and field, a lover of the open country and the blowing wind, a scorner of fatigue, ready any Saturday afternoon when work was over for a walk of twenty miles, if so be he might look on a rare flower or an ivied ruin. And the girl living over in Rutherglen was growing up to womanhood, each charm of mind and feature celebrated for many a

year in glowing verse; and her he, poet-like, married—the household plenishing of the pair, love and hope, and a disregard of inconveniences arising from straitened means. The happiest man in the world—but a widower before the year was out! With his wife died many things, all buried in one grave. Republican dreamings and schemes for the regeneration of the world faded after that. Here is a short poem, full of the rain cloud and the yellow leaf, which has reference to his feelings at the time—

"Gorgeous are thy woods, October!
Clad in glowing mantles sear;
Brightest tints of beauty blending
Like the west, when day's descending,
Thou 'rt the sunset of the year.

"Fading flowers are thine, October!
Droopeth sad the sweet blue-bell;
Gone the blossoms April cherish'd—
Violet, lily, rose, all perish'd—
Fragrance fled from field and dell.

"Songless are thy woods, October!
Save when redbreast's mournful lay
Through the calm gray morn is swelling,
To the list'ning echoes telling
Tales of darkness and decay.

"Saddest sounds are thine, October!
Music of the falling leaf
O'er the pensive spirit stealing,
To its inmost depths revealing:
'Thus all gladness sinks in grief.'

"I do love thee, drear October!
More than budding, blooming Spring—
Hers is hope, delusive smiling,
Trusting hearts to grief beguiling;
Mem'ry loves thy dusky wing.

"Joyous hearts may love the summer,
Bright with sunshine, song, and flower;
But the heart whose hopes are blighted,
In the gloom of woe benighted,
Better loves thy kindred bower.

"'Twas in thee, thou sad October!
Death laid low my bosom flower.
Life hath been a wintry river,
O'er whose ripple gladness never
Gleameth brightly since that hour.

"Hearts would fain be with their treasure,
Mine is slumb'ring in the clay;
Wandering here alone, uncheery,
Deem 't not strange this heart should weary
For its own October day."

The greater proportion of Mr Macdonald's poems first saw the light in the columns of the *Glasgow Citizen*, then, as now, conducted by Mr James Hedderwick, an accomplished journalist, and a poet of no mean order. The casual connexion of contributor and editor ripened into friendship, and in 1849, Mr Macdonald was permanently engaged as Mr Hedderwick's sub-editor. He was now occupied in congenial tasks, and a gush of song followed this accession of leisure and opportunity.

Sunshine and the scent of flowers seemed to have stolen into the weekly columns. You "smelt the meadow" in casual paragraph and in leading article. The *Citizen* not only kept its eye on Louis Napoleon and the Czar, it paid attention to the building of the hedge-sparrow's nest, and the blowing of the wild flower as well.

Still more to prose than to verse did Mr Macdonald at this time direct his energies; and he was happy enough to encounter a subject exactly suited to his powers and mental peculiarities. He was the most uncosmopolitan of mortals. He had the strongest local attachments. In his eyes, Scotland was the fairest portion of the planet; Glasgow, the fairest portion of Scotland; and Bridgeton—the district of the city in which he dwelt—the fairest portion of Glasgow. He would have shrieked like a mandrake at uprootal. He never would pass a night away from home. But he loved nature—and the snowdrop called him out of the smoke to Castle Milk, the lucken-gowan to Kenmure, the craw-flower to Gleniffer. His heart clung to every ruin in the neighbourhood like the ivy. He was learned in epitaphs, and spent many an hour in village churchyards in extracting sweet and bitter thoughts from the half-obliterated inscriptions. Jaques, Isaak Walton, and Old Mortality, in one, he knew

Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, and Ayrshire by heart. Keenly sensible to natural beauty, full of antiquarian knowledge, and in possession of a prose style singularly quaint, picturesque, and humorous, he began week, by week, in the columns of the *Citizen*, the publication of his "Rambles Round Glasgow." City people were astonished to learn that the country beyond the smoke was far from prosaic —that it had its traditions, its antiquities, its historical associations, its glens and waterfalls worthy of special excursions. These sketches were afterwards collected, and ran, in their separate and more convenient form, through two editions. No sooner were the "Rambles" completed than he projected a new series of sketches, entitled, "Days at the Coast" —sketches which also appeared in the columns of a weekly newspaper. Mr Macdonald's best writing is to be found in this book—several of the descriptive passages being really notable in their way. As we read, the Firth of Clyde glitters before us, with white villages sitting on the green shores: Bute and the twin Cumbraes are asleep in sunshine; while beyond, a stream of lustrous vapour is melting on the grisly Arran peaks. The publication of these sketches raised the reputation of their author, and, like the others, they received the honour of collection, and a separate issue

But little more has to be said concerning his literary activity. The early afternoon was setting in. During the last eighteen months of his life he was engaged on one of the Glasgow morning journals; and when in its columns he rambled as of yore, it was with a comparatively infirm step, and an eye that had lost its interest and lustre. "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her;" and when the spring-time came, Macdonald, remembering all her former sweetness, journeyed to Castle Milk to see the snowdrops—for there, of all their haunts in the west, they come earliest and linger latest. It was a dying visit, an eternal farewell. Why have I written of this man so? Because he had the knack of making friends of all with whom he came into contact, and it was my fortune to come into more frequent and more intimate contact with him than most. He was neither a great man nor a great poet—in the ordinary senses of these terms—but since his removal there are perhaps some half-dozen persons in the world who feel that the "strange superfluous glory of the air" lacks something, and that because an eye and an ear are gone, the colour of the flower is duller, the song of the bird less sweet, than in a time they can remember.

Both Dr Strang and Mr Macdonald have written

about Glasgow, and by their aid we shall be able to see something of the city and its surroundings.

The history of the city, from the period of St Mungo to the commercial crisis in 1857 and the fall of the Western Bank, presents many points of interest. Looking back some thirteen centuries into the gray morning-light of time, we see St Mungo led by an angel, establishing himself on the banks of the Molendinar, and erecting a rude chapel or oratory. There for many summers and winters he prayed his prayers, sung his *aves*, and wrought his miracles. The fame of his sanctity spread far and wide, and many pilgrims came to converse with, and be counselled by, the holy man. In process of time—the prayers of the saint proving wondrously efficacious, and the Clyde flowing through the lower grounds at a little distance being populous with salmon—people began to gather, and a score or so of wooden huts, built on the river bank, was the beginning of the present city. In 1197 the cathedral was consecrated by a certain Bishop Jocelyn, and from thence, on to the Reformation, its affairs continued in a prosperous condition; its revenues, taking into consideration the poverty of the country and the thinness of the population, were considerable; and its bishops were frequently

men of ambition and of splendid tastes. Its interior was enriched by many precious relics. On days of high festival, the Lord Bishop and his officials, clad in costly vestments, entered by the great western door, and as the procession swept onward to the altar, incense fumed from swinging censers, the voices of the choir rose in rich and solemn chanting, the great organ burst on the ear with its multitudinous thunders, and rude human hearts were bowed to the ground with contrition, or rose in surges of sound to heaven in ecstasy. Glasgow, too, is closely connected with Wallace. The Bell o' the Brae saw the flash of his sword as the Southrons fled before him. At the kirk of Rutherglen, Sir John Menteith and Sir Aymer de Vallance met to plan the capture of the hero : and at Rob Royston the deed of shame was consummated. Menteith, with sixty followers, surrounded the house in which Wallace slept. Traitors were already within. His weapons were stolen. Kierly, his servant, was slain. According to Blind Harry, at the touch of a hand Wallace sprung up—a lion at bay. He seized an oaken stool—the only weapon of offence within reach—and at a blow broke one rascal s back, in a second splashed the wall with the blood and brains of another, when the whole pack threw themselves upon him. bore him

down by sheer weight, and secured him. He was conveyed to Dumbarton, then held by the English, and from thence was delivered into the hands of Edward. The battle of Langside was fought in the vicinity of the city. Moray, lying in Glasgow, intercepted Mary on her march from Hamilton to Dumbarton, and gave battle. Every one knows the issue. For sixty miles without drawing rein the queen fled towards England and a scaffold. Moray returned to Glasgow through the village of Gorbals, his troopers, it is said, wiping their bloody swords on the manes of their horses as they rode, and went thence to meet his assassin in Linlithgow town. During the heat and frenzy of the Reformation, nearly all our ecclesiastical edifices went to the ground, or came out of the fierce trial with interiors pillaged, altars desecrated, and the statues of apostles and saints broken or defaced. Glasgow Cathedral was assailed like the rest; already the work of destruction had begun, when the craftsmen of the city came to the rescue. Their exertions on that occasion preserved the noble building for us. They were proud of it then; they are proud of it to-day. During the persecution, the country to the west of Glasgow was overrun by dragoons, and many a simple Covenanter had but short shrift—seized, tried, con-

demned, shot, in heaven, within the hour. The rambler is certain to encounter, not only in village churchyards, but by the wayside, or in the hearts of solitary moors, familiar but with the sunbeam and the cry of the curlew, rude martyr stones, their sculptures and letters covered with lichen, and telling with difficulty the names of the sufferers and the manner of their deaths, and intimating that—

> "This stone shall witness be
> 'Twixt Presbyterie and Prelacie."

The next striking event in the history of the city is the visit of Prince Charles. Enter on the Christmas week of 1745-46 the wild, foot-sore, Highland host on its flight from Derby. How the sleek citizens shrink back from the worn, hairy faces, and fierce eyes in which the lights of plunder burn. "The Prince, the Prince! which is the Prince?" "That's he—yonder—wi' the lang yellow hair." Onward rides, pale and dejected, the throne-haunted man. He looks up as he catches a fair face at a window, and you see he inherits the Stuart smile and the Stuart eye. He, like his fathers, will provoke the bitterest hatred, and be served by the wildest devotion. Men will gladly throw away their lives for him. The blood of nobles will redden scaffolds for him. Shepherds and herdsmen will dare death

to shelter him; and beautiful women will bend over his sleep—wrapped in clansman's plaid on bed of heather or bracken—to clip but one shred of his yellow hair, and feel thereby requited for all that they and theirs have suffered in his behalf. But with all his beauty and his misfortunes, his appearance in Glasgow created little enthusiasm. He scarcely gained a recruit. Only a few ladies donned in his honour white breast-knots and ribbons. He levied a heavy contribution on the inhabitants. A prince at the head of an army in want of brogues, and who insisted on being provided with shoe-leather *gratis*, was hardly calculated to excite the admiration of prudent Glasgow burgesses. He did not remain long. The Green beheld for one day the far-stretching files and splendour of the Highland war, on the next—in unpaid shoe-leather—he marched to his doom. Victory, like a stormy sunbeam, burned for a moment on his arms at Falkirk, and then all was closed in blood and thunder on Culloden Moor.

It is about this period that Dr Strang's book on the "Clubs" begins. In those old, hospitable, hard-drinking days, Glasgow seems to have been pre-eminently a city of clubs. Every street had its tavern, and every tavern had its club. There were morning clubs, noon-day clubs, evening clubs, and

all-day clubs, which, like the sacred fire, never went out. The club was a sanctuary wherein nestled friendship and enjoyment. The member left his ordinary life outside the door, like his great-coat, and put it on again when he went away. Within the genial circle of the club were redressed all the ills that flesh is heir to: the lover forgot Nerissa's disdain, the debtor felt no longer his creditor's eye. At the sight of the boon companions, Care packed up his bundles and decamped, or if he dared remain, he was immediately laid hold off, plunged into the punch-bowl, and there was an end of him for that night at least. Unhappily those clubs are dead, but as their ghosts troop past in Dr Strang's pages, the sense is delicately taken by an odour of rum-punch. Shortly after the Pretender's visit to the city, the Anderston Club—so called from its meetings being held in that little village—flourished, drank its punch, and cracked its jokes on Saturday afternoons. Perhaps no club connected with the city, before or since, could boast of a membership so distinguished. It comprised nearly all the University professors. Dr Moore, professor of Greek; Professor Ross, who faithfully instilled the knowledge of Humanities into the Glasgow youth; Drs Cullen and Hamilton, medical teachers of eminence;

Adam Smith; the Brothers Foulis—under whose auspices the first Fine-Art Academy was established in Scotland, and from whose printing-press the Greek and Roman classics were issued with a correctness of text and beauty of typography which had then no parallel in the kingdom—were regular and zealous members. But the heart and soul of the Anderston Club seems to have been Dr Simson, professor of mathematics. His heart vibrated to the little hostelry of Anderston as the needle vibrates to the pole. He could have found his way with his eyes shut. The following story, related of the professor by Dr Strang, is not unamusing in itself, and a fair specimen of the piebald style in which the greater portion of the book is written :—

"The mathematician ever made it a rule to throw algebra and arithmetic 'to the dogs,' save in so far as to discover the just *quadratic equation* and *simple division* of a bowl of punch. One thing alone in the club he brought his mathematics to bear upon, and that was his glass. This had been constructed on the truest principles of geometry for emptying itself easily, the stalk requiring to form but a very acute angle with the open lips ere its whole contents had dropped into the æsophagus. One fatal day, however, Girzy,

the black-eyed and dimple-cheeked servant of the hostelry, in making arrangements for the meeting of the club, allowed this favourite piece of crystal, as many black and blue eyed girls have done before and since, to slip from her fingers and be broken. She knew the professor's partiality for his favourite beaker, and thought of getting another; but the day was too far spent, and the Gallowgate, then the receptacle of such luxuries, was too far distant to procure one for that day's meeting of the fraternity. Had Verreville, the city of glass, been then where it has since stood, the mathematician's placid temper might not have been ruffled, nor might Girzy have found herself in so disagreeable a dilemma. The club met, the hen-broth smoked in every platter, the few standard dishes disappeared, the *medoc* was sipped, and was then succeeded, as usual, by a goodly-sized punch-bowl. The enticing and delicious compound was mixed, tasted, and pronounced nectar: the professor, dreaming for a moment of some logarithm of Napier's, or problem of Euclid's, pushed forward to the fount unconsciously the glass which stood before him, drew it back a brimmer, and carried it to his lips; but lo! the increased angle at which the professor was obliged to raise his arm, roused him from his momentary reverie, and, pulling the drinking-

cup from his lips as if it contained the deadliest henbane, exclaimed, 'What is this, Girzy, you have given me? I cannot drink out of this glass. Give me my own, you little minx. You might now well know that *this* is not mine.' 'Weel-a-wat, it's a I hae for't, Maister Simson,' answered Girzy, blushing. 'Hush, hush,' rejoined the mathematician, 'say not so. I know it is not *my* glass, for the outer edge of this touches my nose, and *mine* never did so.' The girl confessed the accident, and the professor, though for some minutes sadly out of humour, was at length appeased, and swallowed his *sherbet* at the risk of injuring his proboscis."

Dr Strang informs us that the eccentric mathematician, in his progress from the University to Anderston, was in the habit of counting his steps, and that, walking blind-folded, he could have told the distance to a fraction of an inch. He has omitted, however, to tell us whether the Doctor's steps were counted on his return, and if the numbers corresponded!

Along with the notices of the clubs subsequent to the one mentioned, Dr Strang gives his reader a tolerable notion of how it went with Glasgow in those years. We have a peep of the Trongate during the lucrative tobacco trade, when Glasgow

had her head not a little turned by her commercial prosperity. There are rich citizens now in the streets. Behold Mr Glassford, picking his steps daintily along the Crown o' the Causeway, with scarlet cloak, flowing wig, cocked-hat, and gold-headed cane! He has money in his purse, and he knows it too. All men warm themselves in the light of his countenance. If he kicks you, you are honoured, for is it not with a golden foot? How the loud voice droops, how the obsequious knee bends before him! He told Tobias Smollett yesterday that he had five-and-twenty ships sailing for him on the sea, and that half-a-million passed through his hands every year. Pass on a little farther, and yonder is Captain Paton sunning himself on the ample pavement in front of the Tontine. Let us step up to him. He will ask us to dinner, and mix us a bowl of punch flavoured with his own limes—

"In Trinidad that grow."

For hospitality was then, as now, a characteristic of the city. The suppers—the favourite meal—were of the most substantial description. A couple of turkeys, a huge round of beef, and a bowl—a very Caspian Sea—of punch, seething to its silver brim, and dashed with delicate slices of lime or

lemon—formed the principal ingredients. Good fellowship was the order of the day. In the morning and forenoon the merchants congregated in the Tontine reading-room for news and gossip, and at night the punch-bowl was produced, emptied, replenished, and emptied again, while the toasts—"Down with the Convention," "The Pilot that weathered the storm"—were drunk with enthusiasm in some cosy tavern in the then aristocratic Princes Street. At a later period, during the disturbed years that preceded the Reform Bill, we see the moneyed classes—"soor-milk jockeys" they were profanely nicknamed by the mob—eagerly enrolling themselves in yeomanry corps: on field days resplendent in laced jacket and shako, or clanking through the streets with spur and sabre. As we approach our own times the clubs pale their ineffectual fires—they shrink from planets to wills-o'-the-wisp; at last

> "They die away
> And fade into the light of common day."

Glasgow is now, so far as history is concerned, a clubless city.

During the commercial distress of 1848-49, and the agitation consequent on the flight of Louis Philippe and the establishment of the French Re-

public, Glasgow had the bad eminence of going further in deeds of lawlessness and riot than any other city in the empire. The "Glasgow operative" is, while trade is good and wages high, the quietest and most inoffensive of creatures. He cares comparatively little for the affairs of the nation. He is industrious and contented. Each six months he holds a saturnalia—one on New-year's day, the other at the Fair, (occurring in July,) and his excesses at these points keep him poor during the intervals. During periods of commercial depression, however, when wages are low, and he works three-quarter time, he has a fine nose to scent political iniquities. He begins to suspect that all is not right with the British constitution. These unhappy times, too, produce impudent demagogues, whose power of lungs and floods of flashy rhetoric work incredible mischief. To these he seriously inclines his ear. He is hungry and excited. He is more anxious to reform Parliament than to reform himself. He cries out against tyranny of class-legislation, forgetting the far harder tyranny of the gin-palace and the pawn-shop. He thinks there should be a division of property. Nay, it is known that some have in times like these marked out the very houses they are to possess when the goods of the world are segre-

gated and appropriated anew. What a dark sea of ignorance and blind wrath is ever weltering beneath the fair fabric of English prosperity! This dangerous state of feeling had been reached in the year spoken of. Hungry, tumultuous meetings were held on the Green. The ignorant people were maddened by the harangues of orators—fellows who were willing to burn the house of the nation about the ears of all of us, if so be *their* private pig could be roasted thereby. "The rich have food," said they, "you have none. You cannot die of hunger. Take food by the strong hand wherever you can get it." This advice was acted upon. The black human sea poured along London Street, and then split—one wave rushed up the High Street, another along the Trongate—each wasting as it went. The present writer, then a mere lad, was in the streets at the time. The whole thing going on before his eyes seemed strange, incredible, too monstrous to be real—a hideous dream which he fought with and strove to thrust away. For an hour or so all order was lost. All that had been gained by a thousand years of strife and effort—all that had been wrested from nature—all the civilities and amenities of life—seemed drowned in a wild sea of scoundrelism. The world was turned topsy-turvy. Impossibility became matter of fact.

Madness ruled the hour. Gun-shops were broken open, and wretched-looking men, who hardly knew the muzzle from the stock, were running about with muskets over their shoulders. In Buchanan Street a meal cart was stopped, overturned, the sacks ripped open with knives, and women were seen hurrying home to their famishing broods with aprons full; some of the more greedy with a cheese under each arm. In Queen Street a pastry cook's was attacked, the windows broken, and the delicacies they contained greedily devoured. A large glass-case, filled with coloured lozenges, arranged in diamond patterns, stood serene for a while amid universal ruin. A scoundrel smashed it with a stick; down rushed a deluge of lozenges, and a dozen rioters were immediately sprawling over each other on the ground to secure a share of the spoil. By this time alarm had spread. Shops were shutting in all directions, some of the more ingenious traders, it is said, pasting "A Shop to Let" upon their premises—that they might thereby escape the rage or the cupidity of the rioters. At last, weary with spoliation, the mob, armed with guns, pistols, and what other weapons they had secured, came marching along the Trongate, a tall begrimed collier, with a rifle over his shoulder, in front. This worthy, more than two-thirds drunk,

kept shouting at intervals, "Vive la Republic! We'll hae Vive la Republic, an' naething *but* Vive la Republic!" to which intelligible political principle his followers responded with vociferous cheers. At last they reached the Cross. Here a barricade was in process of erection. Carts were stopped and thrown down, and London Street behind was crowded with men, many of them provided with muskets. On a sudden the cry arose, "The sogers, the sogers!" terrible to the heart of a British mob. Hoofs were heard clattering along the Trongate, and the next moment an officer of Carabineers leaped his horse over the barricade, followed by his men, perhaps a dozen in all. The effect was instantaneous. In five minutes not a rioter was to be seen. When evening fell the Trongate wore an unwonted appearance. Troops stacked their bayonets, lighted their fires, and bivouacked under the piazzas of the Tontine. Sentinels paced up and down the pavements, and dragoons patrolled the streets. Next day the disturbance came to a crisis. A riot occurred in Calton or Bridgeton. The pensioners were sent to quell it there. While marching down one of the principal streets, they were assailed by volleys of stones, the crowd meanwhile falling back sullenly from the bayonet points. The order was given to

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fire, and the veterans, whose patience was completely exhausted, sent their shot right into the mass of people. Several were wounded, and one or more killed. When the pensioners were gone, a corpse was placed on boards, carried through the streets shoulder-high by persons who, by that means, hoped to madden and rouse the citizens; a large crowd attending, every window crammed with heads as the ghastly procession passed. As they approached the centre of the city, a file of soldiers was drawn across the street up which they were marching. When the crowd fell back, the bearers of the dead were confronted by the ominous glitter of steel. The procession paused, stopped, wavered, and finally beat a retreat, and thus the riots closed. That evening people went to look at the spot where the unhappy collision had taken place. Groups of workmen were standing about, talking in tones of excitement. The wall of one of the houses was chipped in places by bullets, and the gutter, into which a man had reeled, smashed by the death-shot, had yet a ruddy stain. Next day tranquillity was in a great measure restored. Masses of special constables had by this time been organised, and marched through the city in force. Although they did not come into contact with the rioters, the bravery they displayed in cudgelling

what unfortunate females, and *keelies* of tender years fell into their hands, gave one a lively idea of the prowess they would have exhibited had they met foes worthy of the batons they bore.

Glasgow, as most British readers are aware, is situated on both sides of the Clyde, some twenty or thirty miles above its junction with the sea. Its rapidity of growth is perhaps without a parallel in the kingdom. There are persons yet alive who remember when the river, now laden with shipping, was an angler's stream, in whose gravelly pools the trout played, and up whose rapids the salmon from the sea flashed like a sunbeam; and when the banks, now lined with warehouses and covered with merchandise of every description, really merited the name of the Broomy Law. Science and industry have worked wonders here. The stream, which a century ago hardly allowed the passage of a herring-boat or a coal-gabbert, bears on its bosom to-day ships from every clime, and mighty ocean steamers which have wrestled with the hurricanes of the Atlantic. Before reaching Glasgow the Clyde traverses one of the richest portions of Scotland, for in summer Clydesdale is one continued orchard. As you come down the stream towards the city, you have, away to the

right, the mineral districts of Gartsherrie and Monkland — not superficially captivating regions. Everything there is grimed with coal-dust. Spring herself comes with a sooty face. The soil seems calcined. You cannot see that part of the world to advantage by day. With the night these innumerable furnaces and iron-works will rush out into vaster volume and wilder colour, and for miles the country will be illuminated—restless with mighty lights and shades. It is the Scottish Staffordshire. On the other hand, away to the south-west stretch the dark and sterile moors of the covenant, with wild moss-haggs, treacherous marshes green as emerald, and dark mossy lochs, on whose margins the water-hen breeds—a land of plovers and curlews, in whose recesses, and in the heart of whose mists, the hunted people lay while the men of blood were hovering near—life and death depending on the cry and flutter of a desert bird, or the flash of a sunbeam along the stretches of the moor. In the middle of that melancholy waste stands the farm-house of Lochgoin, intimately connected with the history of the Covenanters. To this dwelling came Cameron and Peden and found shelter; here lies the notched sword of Captain John Paton, and the drum which was beaten at Drumclog by the hill-folk, and the banner that

floated above their heads that day. And here, too, was written the "Scots Worthies," a book considerered by the austerer portion of the Scottish peasantry as next in sacredness to the Bible. And it has other charms this desolate country: over there by Mearns, Christopher North spent his glorious boyhood; in this region, too, Pollok was born, and fed his gloomy spirit on congenial scenes. Approaching the city, and immediately to the left. are the Cathkin Braes: and close by the village of Cathcart, past which the stream runs murmuring in its rocky bed, is the hill on which Mary stood and saw Moray shiver her army like a potsherd. Below Glasgow, and westward, stretches the great valley of the Clyde. On the left is the ancient burgh of Renfrew; farther back Paisley and Johnston, covered with smoke; above all, Gleniffer Braes, greenly fair in sunlight; afar Neilston Pad, raising its flat summit to the sky, like a table spread for a feast of giants. On the right are the Kilpatrick Hills, terminating in the abrupt peak of Dumbuck; and beyond, the rock of Dumbarton, the ancient fortress, the rock of Ossian's song. It rises before you out of another world and state of things, with years of lamentation and battle wailing around it like sea-mews. By this time the river has widened to an estuary. Port-Glasgow, with

its deserted piers, and Greenock, populous with ships, lie on the left. Mid-channel, Rosneath is gloomy with its woods; on the farther shore Helensburgh glitters like a silver thread; in front, a battlement of hills. You pass the point of Gourock, and are in the Highlands. From the opposite coast Loch Long stretches up into yon dark world of mountains. Yonder is Holy Loch, smallest and loveliest of them all. A league of sea is glittering like frosted silver between you and Dunoon. The mighty city, twenty miles away, loud with traffic, dingy with smoke, is the working Glasgow; here, nestling at the foot of mountains, stretching along the sunny crescents of bays, clothing beaked promontories with romantic villas, is another Glasgow keeping holiday the whole summer long. These villages are the pure wheat; the great city, with its strife and toil, its harass and heart-break—the chaff and husks from which it is winnowed. The city is the soil, this region the bright consummate flower. The merchant leaves behind him in the roar and vapour his manifold vexations, and appears here with his best face and happiest smile. Here no bills intrude, the fluctuations of stock appear not, commercial anxieties are unknown. In their places are donkey rides, the waving of light summer dresses, merry pic-nics, and boating par-

ties at sunset on the splendid sea. Here are the "comforts of the Sautmarket" in the midst of legendary hills. When the tempest is brewing up among the mountains, and night comes down a deluge of wind and rain; when the sea-bird is driven athwart the gloom like a flake of foam severed from the wave, and the crimson eye of the Clock glares at intervals across the frith, you can draw the curtains, stir the fire, and beguile the hours with the smiling wisdom of Thackeray, if a bachelor; if a family man, "The Battle of Prague," or the overture to "Don Giovanni," zealously thumped by filial hands, will drown the storm without. Hugging the left shore, we have Largs before us, where long ago Haco and his berserkers found dishonourable graves. On the other side is Bute, fairest, most melancholy of all the islands of the Clyde. From its sheltered position it has an atmosphere soft as that of Italy, and is one huge hospital now. You turn out in the dog-days, your head surmounted with a straw-hat ample enough to throw a shadow round you, your nether man encased in linen ducks, and see invalids sitting everywhere in the sunniest spots like autumn flies, or wandering feebly about, wrapt in great-coats, their chalk faces shawled to the nose. You are half-broiled, they shiver as if in an icy wind.

Their bent figures take the splendour out of the sea and the glory out of the sunshine. They fill the summer air as with the earthy horror of a new-made grave. You feel that they hang on life feebly, and will drop with the yellow leaf. Beyond Bute are the Cumbraes, twin sisters born in one fiery hour; and afar Arran, with his precipices, purple-frowning on the level sea.

In his preface to the "Rambles" Mr Macdonald writes:—

"The district of which Glasgow is the centre, while it possesses many scenes of richest Lowland beauty, and presents many glimpses of the stern and wild in Highland landscape, is peculiarly fertile in reminiscences of a historical nature. In the latter respect, indeed, it is excelled by few localities in Scotland—a circumstance of which many of our citizens seem to have been hitherto almost unconscious. There is a story told of a gentleman who, having boasted that he had travelled far to see a celebrated landscape on the Continent, was put to the blush by being compelled to own that he had never visited a scene of superior loveliness than one situated on his own estate, and near which he had spent the greater part of his life. The error of this individual is one of which too many are guilty."

These sentences would make an admirable text for a little week-day sermon. For we are prone, in other matters than scenery, to seek our enjoyments at a distance. We would gather that happiness from the far-off stars which, had we the eyes to see, is all the while lying at our feet. You go to look at a celebrated scene. People have returned from it in raptures. You have heard them describe it, you have read about it, and you naturally expect something very fine indeed. When you arrive, the chances are that its beauties are carefully stowed away in a thick mist, or you are drenched to the skin, or you find the hotel full, and are forced to sleep in an outhouse, or on the heather beneath the soft burning planets, and go home with a rheumatism which embitters your existence to your dying day. Or, if you are lucky enough to find the weather cloudless and the day warm, you are doomed to cruel disappointment. Is *that* what you have heard and read so much about? That pitiful drivelling cascade! Why, you were led to expect the wavy grace of the Gray Mare's Tail combined with the flash and thunder of Niagara. That a mountain forsooth! It isn't so much bigger than Ben Lomond after all! You feel swindled and taken in. You commend the waterfall to the fiend. You snap your fingers in the

face of the mountain. "You're a humbug, sir. You're an impostor, sir. I—I'll write to the *Times* and expose you, sir." On the other hand, the townsman, at the close of a useful and busy day, walks out into the country. The road is pretty; he has never been on it before; he is insensibly charmed along. He reaches a little village or clachan, its half-dozen thatched houses set down amid blossoming apple-trees; the smoke from the chimneys, telling of the preparation of the evening meal, floating up into the rose of sunset. A labourer is standing at the door with a child in his arms; the unharnessed horses are drinking at the trough; the village boys and girls are busy at their games; two companies, linked arm-in-arm, are alternately advancing and receding, singing all the while with their sweet shrill voices—

"The Campsie Duke's a riding, a riding, a riding."

This is no uncommon scene in Scotland, and why does it yield more pleasure than the celebrated one that you have gone a hundred miles to see, besides spending no end of money on the way? Simply because you have approached it with a pure, healthy mind, undebauched by rumour or praise. It has in it the element of unexpectedness; which, indeed, is the condition of all delight, for plea-

sure must surprise if it is to be worthy of the name. The pleasure that is expected and looked for never comes, or if it does it is in a shape so changed that recognition is impossible. Besides, you have found out the scene, and have thereby a deeper interest in it. This same law pervades everything. You hear of Coleridge's wonderful conversation, and in an evil hour make your appearance at Highgate. The mild-beaming, silvery-haired sage, who conceived listening to be the whole duty of man, talks for the space of three mortal hours—by you happily unheard. For, after the first twenty minutes, you are conscious of a hazy kind of light before your eyes, a soothing sound is murmuring in your ears, a delicious numbness is creeping over all your faculties, and by the end of the first half-hour you are snoring away as comfortably as if you were laid by the side of your lawful spouse. You are disappointed of course: of the musical wisdom which has been flowing in plenteous streams around, you have not tasted one drop; and you never again hear a man praised for power or brilliancy of conversation without an inward shudder. The next day you take your place on the coach, and are fortunate enough to secure your favourite seat beside the driver. Outside of you is a hard-featured man, wrapt in a huge blue pilot-

coat. You have no idea to what class of society he may belong. It is plain that he is not a gentleman in the superfine sense of that term. He has a very remarkable gift of silence. When you have smoked your cigar out, you hazard a remark about the weather. He responds. You try his mind as an angler tries a stream, to see if anything will rise. One thing draws on another, till, after an hour's conversation, which has flown over like a minute, you find that you have really learned something. The unknown individual in the pilot-coat, who has strangely come out of space upon you, and as strangely returns into space again, has looked upon the world, and has formed his own notions and theories of what goes on there. On him life has pressed as well as on you; joy at divers times has lighted up his grim features; sorrow and pain have clouded them. There is something in the man; you are sorry when he is dropped on the road, and say "Good-bye," with more than usual feeling. Why is all this? The man in the pilot-coat does not talk so eloquently as S. T. C., but he instructs and pleases you—and just because you went to hear the celebrated Talker, as you go to see the Irish Giant, or the Performing Pig, you are disappointed, as you deserved to be. The man in the pilot-coat has

come upon you naturally, unexpectedly. At its own sweet will "the cloud turned forth its silver lining on the night." Happiness may best be extracted from the objects surrounding us. The theory on which our loud tumultuary modern life is based—that we can go to Pleasure, that if we frequent her haunts we are sure to find her—is a heresy and a falsehood. She will not be constrained. She obeys not the call of the selfish or the greedy. Depend upon it she is as frequently found on homely roads, and amongst rustic villages and farms, as among the glaciers of Chamouni, or the rainbows of Niagara.

In one of his earliest rambles, Mr Macdonald follows the river for some miles above the city. The beauty of the Clyde below Glasgow is well known to the civilised world. Even the *roué* of landscape, to whom the Rhine is weariness and the Alps common-place, has felt his heart leap within him while gazing on that magnificent estuary. But it is not only in her maturity that the Clyde is fair. Beauty attends her from her birth on Rodger Law until she is wedded with ocean —Bute, and the twin Cumbraes, bridesmaids of the stream ; Arran, groomsman to the main. With Mr Macdonald's book in pocket to be a companion at intervals—for one requires no guide, having years

before learned every curve and bend of the river—let us start along its banks towards Carmyle and Kenmure wood. We pass Dalmarnock Bridge, and leave the city, with its windowed factories and driving wheels and everlasting canopy of smoke behind. The stream comes glittering down between green banks, one of which rises high on the left, so that further vision in that quarter is intercepted. On the right are villages and farms; afar, the Cathkin Braes, the moving cloud shadows mottling their sunny slopes; and straight ahead, and closing the view, the spire of Cambuslang Church, etched on the pallid azure of the sky. We are but two miles from the city, and everything is bright and green. The butterfly flutters past; the dragonfly darts hither and thither. See, he poises himself on his winnowing wings, about half a yard from one's nose, which he curiously inspects; that done, off darts the winged tenpenny-nail, his rings gleaming like steel. There are troops of swallows about. Watch one. Now he is high in air—now he skims the Clyde. You can hear his sharp, querulous twitter as he jerks and turns. Nay, it is said that the kingfisher himself has been seen gleaming along these sandy banks, illuminating them like a meteor. At some little distance a white house is pleasantly situated amongst trees—

it is Dalbeth Convent. As we pass, one of the frequent bells summoning the inmates to devotion is stirring the sunny Presbyterian air. A little on this side of the convent, a rapid brook comes rushing to the Clyde, crossed by a rude bridge of planks, which has been worn by the feet of three generations at the very least. The brook, which is rather huffy and boisterous in its way, particularly after rain, had, a few days before, demolished and broken up said wooden planks, and carried one of them off. Arriving, we find a woman and boy anxious to cross, yet afraid to venture. Service is proffered, and, after a little trouble, both are landed in safety on the farther bank. The woman is plainly, yet neatly dressed, and may be about forty-five years of age or thereby. The boy has turned eleven, has long yellow hair hanging down his back, and looks thin and slender for his years. With them they have something wrapped up in a canvas cloth, which, to the touch as they are handed across, seem to be poles of about equal length. For the slight service the woman returns thanks in a tone which smacks of the southern English counties. "Good-bye" is given and returned, and we proceed, puzzling ourselves a good deal as to what kind of people they are, and what their business may be in these parts, but can come to no

conclusion. However, it does not matter much, for the ironworks are passed now, and the river banks are beautiful. They are thickly wooded, and at a turn the river flows straight down upon you for a mile, with dusty meal-mills on one side, a dilapidated wheel-house on the other, and stretching from bank to bank a half-natural, half-artificial shallow horse-shoe fall, over which the water tumbles in indolent foam—a sight which a man who has no pressing engagements, and is fond of exercise, may walk fifty miles to see, and be amply rewarded for his pains. In front is a ferry—a rope extending across the river by which the boat is propelled—and lo! a woman in a scarlet cloak on the opposite side hails the ferryman, and that functionary comes running to his duty. Just within the din of the shallow horse-shoe fall lies the village of Carmyle, an old, quiet, sleepy place, where nothing has happened for the last fifty years, and where nothing will happen for fifty years to come. Ivy has been the busiest thing here; it has crept up the walls of the houses, and in some instances fairly "put out the light" of the windows. The thatched roofs are covered with emerald moss. The plum-tree which blossomed some months ago blossomed just the same in the spring which witnessed the birth of the oldest inhabitant. For half a century not one stone

has been placed upon another here—there are only a few more green mounds in the churchyard. It is the centre of the world. All else is change: this alone is stable. There is a repose deeper than sleep in this little, antiquated village—ivy-muffled, emerald-mossed, lullabied for ever by the fall of waters. The meal-mills, dusty and white as the clothes of the miller himself, whir industriously; the waters of the lade come boiling out from beneath the wheel, and reach the Clyde by a channel dug by the hand of man long ago, but like a work of nature's now, so covered with furze as it is. Look down through the clear amber of the current, and you see the "long green gleet of the slippery stones" in which the silver-bellied eel delights. Woe betide the luckless village urchin that dares to wade therein. There is a sudden splash and roar. When he gets out, he is laid with shrill objurgations across the broad maternal knee, and fright and wet clothes are avenged by sound whacks from the broad maternal hand. Leaving the village, we proceed onward. The banks come closer, the stream is shallower, and whirls in eddy and circle over a rocky bed. There is a woodland loneliness about the river which is aided by the solitary angler standing up to his middle in the water, and waiting patiently for the bite that never comes, or by the water-ousel

flitting from stone to stone. In a quarter of an hour we reach Kenmuir Bank, which rises some seventy feet or so, filled with trees, their trunks rising bare for a space, and then spreading out with branch and foliage into a matted shade, permitting the passage only of a few flakes of sunlight at noon, resembling, in the green twilight, a flock of visionary butterflies alighted and asleep. Within, the wood is jungle; you wade to the knees in brushwood and bracken. The trunks are clothed with ivy, and snakes of ivy creep from tree to tree, some green with life, some tarnished with decay. At the end of the Bank there is a clear well, in which, your face meeting its shadow, you may quench your thirst. Seated here, you have the full feeling of solitude. An angler wades out into mid-channel—a bird darts out of a thicket, and slides away on noiseless wing—the shallow wash and murmur of the Clyde flows through a silence as deep as that of an American wilderness—and yet, by to-morrow, the water which mirrors as it passes the beauty of the lucken-gowan hanging asleep, will have received the pollutions of a hundred sewers, and be bobbing up and down among the crowds of vessels at the Broomielaw. Returning homeward by the top of Kenmuir Bank, we gaze westward. Out of a world of smoke the stalk

of St Rollox rises like a banner-staff, its vapoury streamer floating on the wind; and afar, through the gap between the Campsie and Kilpatrick hills, Benlomond himself, with a streak of snow upon his shoulder. Could one but linger here for a couple of hours, one would of a verity behold a sight—the sun setting in yonder lurid, smoke-ocean. The wreaths of vapour which seem so common-place and vulgar now, so suggestive of trade and swollen purses and rude manners, would then become a glory such as never shepherd beheld at sunrise on his pastoral hills. Beneath a roof of scarlet flame, one would see the rolling edges of the smoke change into a brassy brightness, as with intense heat; the dense mass and volume of it dark as midnight, or glowing with the solemn purple of thunder; while right in the centre of all, where it has burned a clear way for itself, the broad fluctuating orb, paining the eye with concentrated splendours, and sinking gradually down, a black spire cutting his disk in two. But for this one cannot wait, and the apparition will be unbeheld but by the rustic stalking across the field in company with his prodigious shadow, and who, turning his face to the flame, will conceive it the most ordinary thing in the world. We keep the upper road on our return, and in a short time are again at Carmyle;

we have no intention of tracing the river bank a second time, and so turn up the narrow street. But what is to do? The children are gathered in a circle, and the wives are standing at the open doors. There is a performance going on. The tambourine is sounding, and a tiny acrobat, with a fillet round his brow, tights covered with tinsel lozenges, and flesh-coloured shoes, is striding about on a pair of stilts, to the no small amazement and delight of the juveniles. He turns his head, and—why, it's the little boy I assisted across the brook at Dalbeth three hours ago, and of course that's the old lady who is thumping and jingling the tambourine, and gathering in the halfpennies! God bless her jolly old face! who would have thought of meeting her here? I am recognised, the boy waves me farewell, the old lady smiles and curtsies, thumps her tambourine, and rattles the little bells of it with greater vigour than ever. The road to Glasgow is now comparatively uninteresting. The trees wear a dingy colour; you pass farm-houses, with sooty stacks standing in the yard. 'Tis a coaly, dusty district, which has characteristics worth noting. For, as the twilight falls dewily on far-off lea and mountain, folding up daisy and buttercup, putting the linnet to sleep beside his nest of young in the bunch of broom, here

the circle of the horizon becomes like red-hot steel; the furnaces of the Clyde iron-works lift up their mighty towers of flame, throwing

> "Large and angry lustres o'er the sky,
> And shifting lights across the long dark roads;"

and so, through chase of light and shade, through glimmer of glare and gloom, we find our way back to Glasgow—its low hum breaking into separate and recognisable sounds, its nebulous brightness into far-stretching street-lamps, as we draw near.

The tourist who travels by train from Glasgow to Greenock must pass the town of Paisley. If he glances out of the carriage window he will see beneath him a third-rate Scotch town, through which flows the foulest and shallowest of rivers.

The principal building in the town, and the one which first attracts the eye of a stranger, is the jail; then follow the church spires in their order of merit. Unfortunately the train passes not through Paisley, but over it; and from his "coign of vantage" the tourist beholds much that is invisible to the passenger in the streets. All the back-greens, piggeries, filthy courts, and unmentionable abominations of the place, are revealed to him for a moment as the express flashes darkly across the railway bridge. For the seeing of Scotch towns a

bird's-eye view is plainly the worst point of view. In all likelihood the tourist, as he passes, will consider Paisley the ugliest town he has ever beheld, and feel inwardly grateful that his lot has not been cast therein. But in this the tourist may be very much mistaken. Paisley is a remarkable place—one of the most remarkable in Scotland. Just as Comrie is the abode of earthquakes, Paisley is the abode of poetic inspiration. There is no accounting for the tastes of the celestials. Queen Titania fell in love with Bottom when he wore the ass's head; and Paisley, ugly as it is, is the favourite seat of the Muses. There Apollo sits at the loom and earns eighteen shillings per week. At this moment, and the same might have been said of any moment since the century came in, there is perhaps a greater number of poets living and breathing in this little town than in the whole of England. Whether this may arise from the poverty of the place, on the principle that the sweetness of the nightingale's song is connected in some subtle way with the thorn against which she leans her breast, it may be useless to inquire. Proceed from what cause it may, Paisley has been for the last fifty years or more an aviary of singing birds. To said aviary I had once the honour to be introduced. Some years ago, when dwelling in the outskirts of the town, I received a billet inti-

mating that the L. C. A. would meet on the evening of the 26th Jan. 18—, in honour of the memory of the immortal Robert Burns, and requesting my attendance. N.B.—Supper and drink, 1s. 6d. Being a good deal puzzled by the mystic characters, I made inquiries, and discovered that L. C. A. represented the "Literary and Convivial Association," which met every Saturday evening for the cultivation of the minds of its members—a soil which for years had been liberally irrigated with toddy—with correspondent effects. To this cheap feast of the gods on the sacred evening in question I directed my steps, and beheld the assembled poets. There could scarcely have been fewer than eighty present. Strange! Each of these conceited himself of finer clay than ordinary mortals; each of these had composed verses, some few had even published small volumes or pamphlets of verse by subscription, and drank the anticipated profits; each of these had his circle of admirers and flatterers, his small public and shred of reputation; each of these envied and hated his neighbour; and not unfrequently two bards would quarrel in their cups as to which of them was possessor of the larger amount of fame. At that time the erection of a monument to Thom of Inverury had been talked about, *apropos* of which one of the bards

remarked, "Ou ay, jist like them. They'll bigg us monuments whan we're deid: I wush they'd gie us something whan we're leevin'." In that room, amid that motley company, one could see the great literary world unconsciously burlesqued and travestied, shadowed forth there the emptiness and noise of it, the blatant vanity of many of its members. The eighty poets presented food for meditation. Well, it is from this town that I propose taking a walk, for behind Paisley lie Gleniffer Braes, the scene of Tannahill's songs. One can think of Burns apart from Ayrshire, of Wordsworth apart from Cumberland, but hardly of Tannahill apart from the Braes of Gleniffer. The district, too, is of but little extent; in a walk of three hours you can see every spot mentioned by the poet. You visit his birthplace in the little straggling street, where the sound of the shuttle is continually heard. You pass up to the green hills where he delighted to wander, and whose charms he has celebrated; and you return by the canal where, when the spirit "finely touched to fine issues," was disordered and unstrung, he sought repose. Birth, life, and death lie side by side. The matter of the moral is closely packed. The whole tragedy sleeps in the compass of an epigram.

Leaving the rambling suburbs of Paisley, you

pass into a rough and undulating country with masses of gray crag interspersed with whinny knolls, where, in the evenings, the linnet sings; with narrow sandy roads wandering through it hither and thither, passing now a clump of gloomy firs, now a house where some wealthy townsman resides, now a pleasant corn-field. A pretty bit of country enough, with larks singing above it from dawn to sunset, and where, in the gloaming, the wanderer not unfrequently can mark the limping hare. A little further on are the ruins of Stanley Castle. This castle, in the days of the poet, before the wildness of the country had been tamed by the plough, must have lent a singular charm to the landscape. It stands at the base of the hills which rise above it with belt of wood, rocky chasm, white streak of waterfall—higher up into heath and silence, silence deep as the heaven that overhangs it; where nothing moves save the vast cloud-shadows, where nothing is heard save the cry of the moorland bird. Tannahill was familiar with the castle in its every aspect—when sunset burned on the walls, when the moon steeped it in silver and silence, and when it rose up before him shadowy and vast through the marshy mists. He had his loom to attend during the day, and he knew the place best in its evening aspect. Twilight, with its quietude and

stillness, seemed to have peculiar charms for his sensitive nature, and many of his happiest lines are descriptive of its phenomena. But the glory is in a great measure departed from Stanley Tower; the place has been turned into a reservoir by the Water Company, and the ruin is frequently surrounded by water. This intrusion of water has spoiled the scene. The tower is hoary and broken, the lake looks a thing of yesterday, and there are traces of quite recent masonry about. The lake's shallow extent, its glitter and brightness, are impertinences. Only during times of severe frost, when its surface is iced over, when the sun is sinking in the purple vapours like a globe of red-hot iron—when the skaters are skimming about like swallows, and the curlers are boisterous—for the game has been long and severe—and the decisive stone is roaring up the rink—only in such circumstances does the landscape regain some kind of keeping and homogeneousness. There is no season like winter for improving a country; he tones it down to one colour; he breathes over its waters, and in the course of a single night they become gleaming floors, on which youth may disport itself. He powders his black forest-boughs with the pearlin's of his frosts; and the fissures which spring tries in vain to hide with her flowers, and autumn with

fallen leaves, he fills up at once with a snow-wreath. But we must be getting forward, up that winding road, progress marked by gray crag, tuft of heather, bunch of mountain violets, the country beneath stretching out farther and farther. Lo! a strip of emerald steals down the gray of the hill, and there, by the way-side, is an ample well, with the "netted sunbeam" dancing in it. Those who know Tannahill's "Gloomy Winter's noo awa'" must admire its curious felicity of touch and colour. Turn round, you are in the very scene of the song. In front is "Gleniffer's dewy dell," to the east "Glenkelloch's sunny brae," afar the woods of Newton, over which at this moment laverocks fan the "snaw-white cluds;" below, the "burnie" leaps in sparkle and foam over many a rocky shelf, till its course is lost in that gorge of gloomy firs, and you can only hear the music of its joy. Which is the fairer—the landscape before your eyes, or the landscape sleeping in the light of song? You cannot tell, for they are at once different and the same. The touch of the poet was loving and true. His genius was like the light of early spring, clear from speck or stain of vapour, but with tremulousness and uncertainty in it; happy, but with grief lying quite close to its happiness; smiling, although

the tears are hardly dry upon the cheeks that in a moment may be wet again.

But who is Tannahill? the southern reader asks with some wonder; and in reply it may be said that Burns, like every great poet, had many imitators and successors, and that of these successors in the north country Hogg and Tannahill are the most important. Hogg was a shepherd in The Forest, and he possessed out of sight the larger nature, the greater intellectual force; while as master of the weird and the supernatural there is no Scottish poet to be put beside him. The soul of Ariel seems to inhabit him at times. He utters a strange music like the sighing of the night-wind; a sound that seems to live remote from human habitations. In openness to spiritual beauty, Burns, compared with him, was an ordinary ploughman. Like Thomas the Rhymer, he lay down to sleep on a green bank on a summer's day, and the Queen of Fancy visited his slumber; and never afterwards could he forget her beauty, and her voice, and the liquid jingling of her bridle bells. Tannahill was a weaver, who wrote songs, became crazed, and committed suicide before he reached middle life. His was a weak, tremulous nature. He was wretched by reason of over-sensitiveness. "He lived retired

as noon-tide dew." He wanted Hogg's strength, self-assertion, humour, and rough sagacity ; nor had he a touch of his weird strain. From Burns, again, he was as different as a man could possibly be. Tannahill knew nothing of the tremendous life-battle fought on wet Mossgiel farm, in fashionable Edinburgh, in provincial Dumfries. He knew nothing of the Love, Scorn, Despair, —those wild beasts that roamed the tropics of Burns's heart. But limited as was his genius, it was in its quality perhaps more exquisite than theirs. He was only a song-writer—both Burns and Hogg were more than that—and some of his songs are as nearly as possible perfect. He knew nothing of the mystery of life. If the fierce hand of Passion had been laid upon his harp, it would have broken at once its fragile strings. He looked upon nature with a pensive yet a loving eye. Gladness flowed upon him from the bright face of spring, despondency from the snow-flake and the sweeping winter winds. His amatory songs have no fire in them. While Burns would have held Annie in his "straining grasp," Tannahill, with a glow upon his cheek, would have pointed out to the unappreciating fair the "plantin' tree-taps tinged wi' gowd," or silently watched the "midges dance aboon the burn." Then, by the

aid of that love of nature, how clearly he sees, and how exquisitely he paints what he sees—

> "Feathery breckans fringe the rocks;
> 'Neath the brae the burnie jouks."

> "Towering o'er the Newton wuds,
> Laverocks fan the snaw-white cluds."

Neither Keats nor Tennyson, nor any of their numerous followers surpassed this unlettered weaver in felicity of colour and touch. Any one wishing to prove the truth of Tannahill's verse, could not do better than bring out his song-book here, and read and ramble, and ramble and read again.

But why go farther to-day? The Peesweep Inn, where the rambler baits, is yet afar on the heath; Kilbarchan, queerest of villages, is basking its straggling length on the hill-side in the sun, peopled by botanical and bird-nesting weavers, its cross adorned by the statue of Habbie Simpson, "with his pipes across the wrong shoulder." Westward is Elderslie, where Wallace was born, and there, too, till within the last few years, stood the oak amongst whose branches, as tradition tells, the hero, when hard pressed by the Southrons, found shelter with all his men. From afar came many a pilgrim to behold the sylvan giant. Before its

fall it was sorely mutilated by time and tourists. Of its timber were many snuff-boxes made. Surviving the tempests of centuries, it continued to flourish green atop, although its heart was hollow as a ruined tower. At last a gale, which heaped our coasts with shipwreck, struck it down with many of its meaner brethren. "To this complexion must we come at last." At our feet lies Paisley with its poets. Seven miles off, Glasgow peers, with church-spire and factory stalk, through a smoky cloud; the country between gray with distance, and specked here and there with the vapours of the trains. How silent the vast expanse! not a sound reaches the ear on the height. Gleniffer Braes are clear in summer light, beautiful as when the poet walked across them. Enough, their beauty and his memory. One is in no mood to look even at the unsightly place beside the canal which was sought when to the poor disordered brain the world was black, and fellow-men ravening wolves. Here he walked happy in his genius; not a man to wonder at and bow the knee to, but one fairly to appreciate and acknowledge. For the twitter of the wren is music as well as the lark's lyrical up-burst; the sigh of the reed shaken by the wind as well as the roaring of a league of pines.

HOME.

WHEN of an autumn evening the train brought me into Edinburgh, the scales of familiarity having to some little extent fallen from my eyes, I thought I had never before seen it so beautiful. Its brilliancy was dazzling and fairy-like. It was like a city of Chinese lanterns. It was illuminated as if for a great victory, or the marriage of a king. Princes Street blazed with street lamps and gay shop-windows. The Old Town was a maze of twinkling lights. The Mound lifted up its starry coil. The North Bridge leaping the chasm, held lamps high in air. There were lights on the Calton Hill, lights on the crest of the Castle. The city was in a full blossom of lights—to wither by midnight, to be all dead ere dawn. And then to an ear accustomed to silence there arose on every side the potent hum of moving multitudes, more august in itself, infinitely more suggestive to the imagination than the noise of the Atlantic on the Skye shores. The sound with which I had been for some time familiar was the voice of many

billows; the sound which was in my ears was the noise of men.

And in driving home, too, I was conscious of a curious oppugnancy between the Skye life which I had for some time been leading, and the old Edinburgh life which had been dropped for a little, and which had now to be resumed. The two experiences met like sheets of metal, but they were still separate sheets — I could not solder them together and make them one. I knew that a very few days would do that for me; but it was odd to attempt by mental effort to unite the experiences and to discover how futile was all such effort. Coming back to Edinburgh was like taking up abode in a house to which one had been for a while a stranger, in which one knew all the rooms and all the articles of furniture in the rooms, but with whose knowledge there was mingled a feeling of strangeness. I had changed my clothes of habit, and for the moment I did not feel so much at ease in the strange Edinburgh, as the familiar Skye, suit.

It was fated, however, that the two modes of life should, in my consciousness, melt into each other imperceptibly When I reached home I found that my friend the Rev. Mr Macpherson of Inverary had sent me a packet of Ossianic trans-

lations. These translations, breathing the very soul of the wilderness I had lately left, I next day perused in my Edinburgh surroundings, and through their agency the two experiences coalesced. Something of Edinburgh melted into my remembrance of Skye—something of Skye was projected into actual Edinburgh. Thus is life enriched by ideal contrast and interchange. With certain of these translations I conclude my task. To me they were productive of much pleasure. And should the shadows in my book have impressed the reader to any extent, as the realities impressed me—if I have in any way kindled the feeling of Skye in his imagination as it lives in mine—these fragments of austere music will not be ungrateful.

EXTRACT FROM CARRICK-THURA.

NIGHT fell on wave-beat Rotha,
The hill-shelter'd bay received the ships;
A rock rose by the skirt of the ocean,
A wood waved over the boom of the waves;
Above was the circle of Lodin,
And the huge stones of many a power;
Below was a narrow plain
And tree and grass beside the sea.
A tree torn by the wind when high
From the skirt of the cairns to the plain.

Beyond was the blue travel of streams;
A gentle breeze came from the stilly sea,
A flame rose from a hoary oak;
The feast of the chiefs was spread on the heath;
Grieved was the soul of the king of shields,
For the chief of dark Carrick of the braves.

The moon arose slow and faint;
Deep slumber fell round the heads of the braves,
Their helmets gleam'd around;
The fire was dying on the hill.
Sleep fell not on the eyelids of the king;
He arose in the sound of his arms
To view the wave-beat Carrick.
The fire lower'd in the far distance,
The moon was in the east red and slow.
A blast came down from the cairn;
On its wings was the semblance of a man,
Orm Lodin, ghastly on the sea.
He came to his own dwelling-place,
His black spear useless in his hand,
His red eye as the fire of the skies,
His voice as the torrent of the mountains
Far distant in the murky gloom.
Fingal raised his spear in the night,
His challenge was heard on the plain—
"Son of the night, from my side,
Take the wind—away;
Why shouldst come to my presence, feeble one,
Thy form as powerless as thy arms?
Do I dread thy dark-brown shape,
Spirit of the circles of Lodin?
Weak is thy shield and thy form of subtle cloud,
Thy dull-edged sword as fire in the great waves,
A blast parts them asunder,
And thou [thyself] art straightway dispersed
From my presence, dark son of the skies.
Call thy blast—away!"

"Wouldst thou drive me from my own circle?"
Said the hollow voice of eeriest sound.
"To me bends the host of the braves;
I look from my wood on the people,
And they fall as ashes before my sight;
From my breath comes the blast of death;
I come forth on high on the wind;
The storms are pouring aloft
Around my brow, cold, gloomy, and dark.
Calm is my dwelling in the clouds,
Pleasant the great fields of my repose."
"Dwell in thy plains,"
Said the mighty king, his hand on his sword;
"Else remember the son of Cumal in the field;
Feeble is thy phantom, great is my strength.
Have I moved my step from the mountain
To thy halls on the peaceful plain?
Has my powerful spear met
In the skyey robe the voice
Of the dark spirit of the circle of Lodin?
Why raise thy brow in gloom?
Why brandishest thy spear on high?
Little I fear thy threats, feeble one,
I fled not from hosts on the field,
Why should flee from the seed of the winds
The mighty hero, Morven's king?
Flee he will not, well he knows
The weakness of thy arm in battle."
"Flee to thy land," replied the Form,
"Flee on the black wind—away!
The blast is in the hollow of my hand—
Mine are the course and wrestling of the storm,
The king of Soroch is my son,
He bends on the hill to my shade,
His battle is at Carrick of the hundred braves,
And safe he shall win the victory—
"Flee to thy own land, son of Cumal,
Else feel to thy sorrow my rage."

High he lifted his dark spear,
Fiercely he bent his lofty head.
Against him Fingal advanced amain, [a-fire,]
His bright-blue sword in hand,
Son of Loon—the swartest cheek'd.
The light of the steel passed through the Spirit,
The gloomy and feeble spirit of death.
Shapeless he fell, yonder [opposite]
On the wind of the black cairns, as smoke
Which a young one breaks, rod in hand,
At the hearth of smoke and struggle,
The Form of Lodin shriek'd in the hill,
Gathering himself in the wind,
Innis-Torc heard the sound,
The waves with terror stay their courses:
Up rose the braves of Cumal's son.
Each hand grasp'd a spear on the hill,
"Where is he?" they cried with frowning rage,
Each armour sounding on its lord.

EXTRACTS FROM FINGAL.

Cuchullin sat by the wall of Tura,
In the shade of the tree of sounding leaf;
His spear leant against the cave-pierced rock,
His great shield by his side on the grass.
The thoughts of the chief were on Cairber.
A hero he had slain in battle fierce,
When the watcher of the ocean came,
The swift son of Fili with the bounding step.
"Arise, Cuchullin, arise,
I see a gallant fleet from the north,
Swift bestir thee, chief of the banquet,
Great is Swaran, numerous is his host!"

"Moran, answered the dauntless blue-eyed,
Weak and trembling wert thou aye;
In thy fear the foe is numerous;
Son of Fili is Fingal,
High champion of the dark-mottled hills."
"I saw their leader," answer'd Moran;
"Like to a rock was the chief,
His spear as a fir on the rocky mountain,
His shield as the rising moon:
He sat on a rock on the shore
As the mist yonder on the hill."
"Many," I said, "chief of the strangers,
Are the champions that rise with thee,
Strong warriors, of hardiest stroke,
And keenest brand in the play of men.
But more numerous and valiant are the braves
That surround the windy Tura."
Answer'd the brave, as a wave on a rock,
"Who in this land is like me?
Thy heroes could not stand in my presence;
But low they should fall beneath my hand.
Who is he would meet my sword?
Save Fingal king of stormy Selma.
Once on a day we grasp'd each other
On Melmor, and fierce was our strife.
The wood fell in the unyielding fight,
The streams turn'd aside, and trembled the cairn.
Three days the strife was renew'd,
Warriors bravest in battle trembled.
On the fourth, said Fingal the king—
'The ocean chief fell in the glen.'
He fell not, was my answer."
Let Cuchullin yield to the chief,
Who is stronger than the mountain storm.
I, said the dauntless blue-eyed,
Yield I shall not to living man.
Cuchullin shall, resolute as he, be
Great in battle, or stainless in death.

Son of Fili, seize my spear,
Strike the joyless and gloomy shield of Sema;
Thou shalt see it high on the wall of spears;
No omen of peace was its sound.
Swift, son of Fili, strike the shield of Sema,
Summon my heroes from forest and copse.
Swift he struck the spotted [bossy] shield,
Each copse and forest answer'd.
Pauseless, the alarm sped through the grove;
The deer and the roe started on the heath:
Curtha leap'd from the sounding rock:
Connal of the doughtiest spear bestirr'd himself
Favi left the hind in the chase:
Crugeal return'd to festive Jura.
Ronan, hark to the shield of the battles,
Cuchullin's land signal, Cluthair,
Calmar, hither come from the ocean:
With thy arms hither come, O Luthair.
Son of Finn, thou strong warrior, arise;
Cairber [come] from the voiced Cromlec;
Bend thy knee, free-hearted Fichi.
Cormag [come] from streamy Lena.
Coilte, stretch thy splendid side, [limbs]
Swift, travelling from Mora,
Thy side, whiter than the foam, spread
On the storm-vex'd sea.
Then might be seen the heroes of high deeds
Descending each from his own winding glen,
Each soul burning with remembrance
Of the battles of the time gone by of old:
Their eyes kindling and searching fiercely round
For the dark foe of Innisfail.
Each mighty hand on the hilt of each brand
Blazing, lightning flashing [*lit.*, streaming bright. like the sun] from their armour.
As pours a stream from a wild glen
Descend the braves from the sides of the mountains,
Each chief in the mail of his illustrious sire.

His stern, dark-visaged warriors behind,
As the gatherings of the waters of the mountains [*i.e.*, rain-clouds]
Around the lightning of the sky.
At every step was heard the sound of arms
And the bark of hounds, high gambling
Songs were humm'd in every mouth,
Each dauntless hero eager for the strife.
Cromlec shook on the face of the mountains,
As they march'd athwart the heath :
They stood on the inclines of the hills,
As the hoary mist of autumn
That closes round the sloping mountain,
And binds its forehead to the sky.

FINGAL, Lib. i., line 1–100.

As rushes a gray stream in foam
From the iron front of lofty Cromla ;
The torrent travelling the mountains,
While dark night enwraps the cairns :
And the cold shades of paly hue
Look down from the skirts of the showers ;
So fierce, so great, so pitiless, so swift
Advanced the hardy seed of Erin.
Their chief, as the great boar [whale] of the ocean,
Drawing the cold waves behind him ;
Pouring his strength as billows ; [or *in* billows,]
'Neath his travel shakes the shore.
The seed of Lochlin heard the sound,
As the cold roaring stream of winter ;
Swift Swaran struck his shield,
And spoke to the son of Arn beside him —
I hear a sound on the side of the mountains,
As the evening fly of slow movements ;
It is the gallant sons of Erin,
Or a storm in the distant woodland.

Like Gormal is the sound,
Ere wakes the tempest in the high seas:
Hie thee to the heights, son of Arn,
Survey each copse and hill-side.
He went, and soon return'd in terror,
His eye fix'd and wild in his head;
His heart beat quick against his side,
His speech was feeble, slow, and broken.
"Arise! thou Lord of the waves,
Mighty chief of the dark shields;
I see the stream of the dark-wooded mountains,
I see the seed of Erin and their lord.
A chariot! the mighty chariot of battle
Advances with death across the plain;
The well-made swift chariot of Cuchullin,
The great son of Sema, mighty in danger.
Behind, it bends down like a wave,
Or the mist on the copse of the sharp rocks;
The light of stones of power [gems] is round,
As the sea round a bark at night.
Of polish'd yew is the beam,
The seats within are of smoothest bone;
The dwelling-place of spears it is,
Of shields, of swords, and of mighty men.
By the right side of the great chariot
Is seen the snorting, high-mettled steed;
The high-maned, broad, black-chested,
High-leaping, strong son of the hills.
Loud and resounding is his hoof:
The spread of his frontlets above
Is like mist on the haunts of the elk;
Bright was his aspect, and swift his going,
Sith-fadda [Long-stride] is his name.
By the other side of the chariot
Is the arch-neck'd, snorting,
Narrow-maned, high-mettled, strong-hoofed,
Swift-footed, wide-nostril'd steed of the mountains,
Du-sron-geal is the name of the horse.

Full a thousand slender thongs
Bind the chariot on high ;
The bright steel bits of the bridles
Are cover'd with foam in their cheeks :
Blazing stones, sparkling bright,
Bend aloft on the manes of the steeds—
Of the steeds that are like the mist on the mountains,
Bearing the chief to his renown.
Wilder than the deer is their aspect,
Powerful as the eagle their strength ;
Their sound is like the savage winter
On Gormal, when cover'd with snow.
In the chariot is seen the chief,
The mighty son of the keenest arms—
Cuchullin of the blue-spotted shields.
The son of Sema, renown'd in song,
His cheek is as the polish'd yew ;
His strong eye is spreading high,
'Neath his dark-arch'd and slender brow.
His yellow hair, as a blaze round his head,
Pouring [waving] round the splendid face of the hero,
While he draws from behind his spear.
Flee, great chief of ships !
Flee from the hero who comes
As a storm from the glen of streams."
" When did I flee ? said the king of ships;
When fled Swaran of the dark shields ?
When did I shun the threatening danger,
Son of Arn—aye feeble ?
I have borne the tempest of the skies,
On the bellowing sea of inclement showers ;
The sternest battles I have borne,
Why should I flee from the conflict,
Son of Arn, of feeblest hand ?
Arise my thousands on the field,
Pour as the roar of the ocean,
When bends the blast from the cloud,
Let gallant Lochlin rise around my steel.

Be ye like rocks on the edge of the ocean,
In my own land of oars,
That lifts the pine aloft
To battle with the tempests of the sky."
As the sound of autumn from two mountains
Towards each other drew the braves,
As a mighty stream from two rocks,
Flowing, pouring on the plain;
Sounding dark, fierce in battle,
Met Lochlin and Innesfail.
Chief mix'd his strokes with chief,
Man contended with man,
Steel clang'd on steel,
Helmets are cleft on high,
Blood is pouring fast around,
The bow-string twangs on the polish'd yew;
Arrows traverse the sky,
Spears strike and fall,
As the bolt of night on the mountains,
As the bellowing seething of the ocean,
When advance the waves on high;
Like the torrent behind the mountains
Was the gloom and din of the conflict.
Though the hundred bards of Cormag were there,
And their songs described the combat,
Scarcely could they tell
Of each headless corpse and death—
Many were the deaths of men and chiefs,
Their blood spreading on the plain.
Mourn, ye race of songs,
For Sith-alum the child of the braves:
Evir, heave thy snowy breast
For gallant Ardan of fiercest look.
As two roes that fall from the mountain,
[They fell] 'neath the hand of dark-shielded Swaran;
While dauntless he moved before his thousands,
As a spirit in the cloudy sky,
A spirit that sits in cloud,

Half made by mist from the north,
When bends the lifeless mariner
A look of woe on the summit of the waves.
Nor slept thy hand by the side,
Chief of the isle of gentle showers;
Thy brand was in the path of spoils,
As lightning flashing thick,
When the people fall in the glen,
And the face of the mountain, as in a blaze,
[Or is seething white with torrents,]
Du-sron-geal snorted over brave men,
Sith-fadda wash'd his hoof in blood,
Behind him lay full many a hero,
As a wood on Cromla of the floods,
When moves the blast through the heath,
With the airy ghosts of night.

Weep on the sounding rock,
Noble daughter of the isle of ships;
Bend thy splendid countenance over the sea,
Thou lovelier than a spirit in the woods,
Rising up soft and slow
As a sunbeam in the silence of the hills.
He fell, soon he fell in the battle,
The youth of thy love is pale,
'Neath the sword of great Cuchullin.
What has made thee so wan and cold?
He will move no more to hardy deeds,
He will not strike the high blood of heroes;
Trenar, youthful Trena has fallen in death;
Maid, thou shalt see thy love no more for ever.
His hounds howl piteously
At home, as they see his ghost,
His bow is unstrung and bare;
His death-sound is on the knoll, [*i.e.*, on the knoll he utters his death-groan.]
As roll a thousand waves to the shore,
So under Swaran advanced the foe:

As meets the shore a thousand waves,
So Erin met the king of ships.
Then arose the voices of death,
The sound of battle-shout and clang of arms,
Shields and mail lay broken on the ground.
A sword like lightning was high in each hand,
The noise of battle rose from wing to wing,
Of battle, roaring, bloody, hot,
As a hundred hammers striking wild,
By turns, showers of red sparks from the glowing forge.
Who are those on hilly Sena?
Who of darkest and fiercest gloom?
Who likest to the murkiest cloud?
The sword of each chief as fire on the waves,
The face of the woods is troubled,
The wave-beat rock shakes on the shore.
Who, but Swaran of ships
And the chief of Erin, renown'd in song?
The eye of the hosts beholds aside
The encounter of the mighty heroes.
Night descended on the combat of the braves,
And hid the undecided conflict.

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